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**By V. I. LENIN**

**ON THE EVE OF  
OCTOBER REVOLUTION**

**First Published December, 1938.**

With a Note by  
**KRISHNASWAMI**

**Price Annas Twelve.**

**"PAMPHLET SERVICE" PUBLICATIONS.**

*Publishers*

**The Socialist Literature Publishing Co.,  
Gokulpura,  
AGRA.**

## INTRODUCTORY

There have been revolutions in the past and usually they ended in changing one group of exploiters at the helm of the State for another such group. The exploiters would change, while exploitation remained.

Such was the case during the period of the great revolutions in England, France, Germany etc. But the Paris Commune was altogether a different one. It was the first glorious, heroic attempt on the part of the proletariat to turn history against Feudalism and Capitalism.

The October Revolution differs from these revolutions *in principle*. The fundamental and most important feature of the October Revolution is its *Socialist* character. This feature is expressed in the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the first transitional measures to a developed programme of socialist construction.

Further, the October revolution, by striking at the weakest link in the chain of imperialism has snapped the continuity of the chain. This is the first breach in the citadel of capitalism and has shown to the workers of other countries how the struggle against imperialism must be fought. The Russian October Revolution is the beginning of the world proletarian revolution.

It is precisely for this reason that the October Revolution is not merely a revolution "within national bounds." It is, above all, a revolution of an international, "World

embracing " character. It denotes a radical change in the Universal history of mankind, in the historical destinies of world capitalism, in the movement of the proletariat and in their methods of organisation, struggle and forms of organisation, and above all, in the everyday life, culture and ideology of the exploited masses throughout the world.

Such are the facts that make the October Russian Revolution of a universal character. These facts constitute also the root causes of that profound sympathy which the oppressed classes of all countries feel for the October Revolution. They regard the October Revolution as the first step towards their own deliverance.

At the same time, these fundamental questions solved by the October Revolution for the people of Russia indicate the line along which it exercises its influence over the development throughout the world.

We trust that the 19 Chapters of this book from the pen of Lenin during the preparations for the Armed Rising will be of immense value to the Indian readers and make them see clearly what the October Revolution was and has been and how it has transformed the Character of our National struggle, given it a new tone and a new striking force.

This collection of Lenin's writings on the eve of October is being published as the 21st Anniversary Commemoration Volume.

*Agra*

KRISHNASWAMI.

*November, 1938.*

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# ON THE EVE OF OCTOBER REVOLUTION

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## PART I

### THE AIMS OF THE REVOLUTION

[Lenin declared in September and October 1917 in his two articles—"The Threatening Catastrophe and How to fight it," and "Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power."—that the immediate task and duty of the workers and the Bolshevik Party was to seize power. In these documents of historic significance he set forth the programme of the Proletarian Revolution.

This programme fundamentally is the same as that which Lenin had already set forth in his April Theses on "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution" and "The Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution."

"The Aims of the Revolution" in the main reproduces in a more simple form and in a more popular style the contents of his long articles on this question.]

Russia is a petty-bourgeois country. The vast majority of the population belongs to this class. Its vacillation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is inevitable. Only when it joins the proletariat will the victory of the cause of the revolution, of the cause of peace, freedom and



land for the toilers, be secured— easily, peacefully, swiftly and smoothly.

The course of our revolution reveals this vacillation in practice. Let us then not harbour any illusions concerning the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties : let us keep firmly to our class proletarian path. The poverty of the poor peasants, the horrors of the war, the horrors of the famine—all these are bringing home more and more clearly to the masses the correctness of the proletarian path, the necessity of supporting the proletarian revolution.

The “peaceful” petty-bourgeois hopes in a “coalition” with the bourgeoisie, in compromises with the bourgeoisie, in the possibility of “calmly” waiting for an “early” convocation of the Constituent Assembly and so forth—these hopes are being mercilessly, cruelly and implacably dashed to the ground by the course of the revolution. The Kornilov affair was the last cruel lesson, a great lesson, a lesson which supplemented thousands and thousands of small lessons of deception practised on the workers and peasants by the local capitalists and landlords, of deception practised on the soldiers by the officers, and so on and so forth.

Discontent, indignation and bitterness are spreading in the army and among the peasants and workers. The “coalition” of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks with the bourgeoisie, which promises everything and does nothing, is irritating the masses, opening their eyes to the truth and driving them to revolt.

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The opposition of the "Lefts" is growing among the Socialist-Revolutionaries (Spiridonova and others) and among the Mensheviks (Martov and others), and already embraces 40 per cent of the "Council" and "Congress" of these parties, while *below*, among the proletariat and the peasantry, particularly the poor peasantry, the *majority* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are "*Lefts*."

The Kórnilov affair is instructive. The Kornilov affair has proved very instructive.

One does not know whether the Soviets can now go farther than the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and thus secure a peaceful development of the revolution, or whether they will continue to mark time, and thus render a proletarian uprising inevitable.

That one does not know.

It is our business to help in every possible way to secure a "last" chance for a peaceful development of the revolution. We can help to bring this about by expounding our programme, by explaining its general national character and its absolute harmony with the interests and demands of the enormous majority of the population.

The following lines are an attempt at such an exposition of our programme.

Let us take this programme to the rank and file, to the masses, to the office employees, to the workers peasants, not only to our own, but particularly to those who follow the Socialist-Revolutionaries, to the non-party elements, to the unenlightened. Let us endeavour to

inspire them to form their independent judgment, <sup>to</sup> to make their own decisions, to send *their* own delegations to the Conference, to the Soviets, to the government. Then our work will not have been in vain, *no matter what* the outcome of the Conference may be. It will prove useful for the Conference, for the elections to the Constituent Assembly, and for every political activity generally.

Events are proving that the Bolshevik programme and tactics are correct. From May 3 to the Kornilov affair—what a crowded span!

Experience during that span taught the *masses*, the *oppressed classes*, a great deal; the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks have completely parted ways with the masses. This will be revealed best of all by a concrete programme, if we succeed in securing its discussion among the masses.

### The Fatal Danger of Compromise With the Capitalists

(1) To leave even a few representatives of the bourgeoisie in the government, to leave such notorious Kornilovists in power as Generals Alexeyev, Klembovsky, Bagratyon and Gagarin, or such as have proved their utter impotence when confronted by the bourgeoisie and their *penchant* for Bonapartist action, like Kerensky, is to throw the door wide open to famine and inevitable economic catastrophe, which the capitalists are intentionally accelerating and intensifying, and to a military catastrophe; for the army hates the general staff and has no enthusiasm for the imperialist war. Moreover, if the Kornilovist generals and officers remain in power they will, undoubtedly, *deli-*

*berately open the front* to the Germans, as they did in the case of Galicia and Riga. Only by the formation of a new government on a new basis, as explained below, can this be prevented. After all we have gone through since May 3 (April 20), were the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to continue any kind of compromise with the bourgeoisie, it would be not so much a mistake as a direct betrayal of the people and the revolution.

### **Power to the Soviet**

(2) The entire power of the state must pass exclusively to the representatives of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, acting in accordance with a definite programme, and the government must be fully answerable to the Soviets. New elections to the Soviets must be held immediately, both in order to register the experiences gained by the people during the recent weeks of revolution, which have been so rich in events, and in order to eliminate crying injustices that have in places remained uncorrected (non-proportional and unequal elections, etc.)

In the localities, where democratically elected institutions still do not exist, and in the army, the power must be transferred exclusively to the local Soviets and to commissars elected by them, and to other exclusively elective institutions.

The arming of the workers and of the revolutionary troops, *i.e.*, those who have in practice proved their ability to suppress the Kornilovists, must be effected unconditionally and universally with the full support of the state.

### Peace to the Nations

(3) The Soviet government must *immediately* make proposals to *all* the belligerent nations (*i.e.*, simultaneously both to their governments and to the masses of workers and peasants) for the conclusion without delay, of a general peace on democratic conditions, and an immediate armistice (at least for three months).

The chief condition for a democratic peace is the renunciation of annexations—not in the mistaken sense that all the powers are to receive back what they have lost, but in the only correct sense that *every* nationality, without a single exception, both in Europe and in the colonies, shall obtain the freedom and the possibility of deciding for itself whether it shall become a *separate* state or whether it shall form part of another state.

Proposing these conditions of peace, the Soviet government must itself immediately proceed to put them into effect, *i.e.*, it must publish and repudiate the secret treaties by which we are still bound, treaties which were concluded by the Tsar and which promise the Russian capitalists the pillage of Turkey, Austria, etc. Then, it is our duty immediately to satisfy the demands of the Ukrainians and the Finns. We must guarantee them, as well as all the other non-Russian nationalities in Russia, full freedom, including freedom of secession. The same must apply to the *whole* of Armenia; we must undertake to evacuate it, as well as the Turkish lands occupied by us, and so forth.

Such conditions of peace will not be favourably received by the capitalists; but they will be received by

all the peoples with such tremendous sympathy, they will cause such a great, world-historic outburst of enthusiasm and such general indignation against the dragging out of this predatory war, that it is most probable that we shall at once obtain an armistice and consent to the commencement of peace negotiations. For the workers' revolution against the war is irresistibly growing everywhere; and it can be advanced not by talk of peace (with which the workers and peasants have so long been deceived by all the imperialist governments, including our own, the Kerensky government) but by breaking with the capitalists and making proposals for peace.

If the most improbable eventuates, *viz.*, if not a single belligerent state consents even to an armistice, then, as far as we are concerned, the war will really become a war forced upon us, a really just and defensive war. The mere recognition of this fact by the proletariat and the poor peasantry will render Russia many times stronger even from the military point of view, especially after we have completely broken with the capitalists, who are robbing the people; not to mention the fact that under such conditions the war on our part will in actual fact be a war in alliance with the oppressed classes of all countries, a war in alliance with the oppressed nations of the whole world.

In particular, the people must be cautioned against the assertion of the capitalists, which sometimes influences the more timorous and the philistines, that in the event of rupture of the present predatory alliance with the British and other capitalists the latter are capable of doing serious

secrets and the establishment of unrelaxing vigilance by the workers and peasants over that insignificant minority, the capitalists, who wax rich on government contracts and who evade furnishing returns of, and paying fair taxes on their profits and properties.

These measures, which will not deprive the middle peasants, or the Cossacks, or the small artisans, of a single kopek of their property, are absolutely fair from the point of view of the equitable distribution of the burden of the war and are absolutely urgent as measures against famine. Only by curbing the marauding tendencies of the capitalists and by putting a stop to their deliberate interruption of production, will it be possible to increase the productivity of labour, establish universal labour service, regulate the exchange of grain for industrial products, and secure the return to the treasury of many billions of paper money now hoarded by the wealthy.

Unless these measures are taken, the abolition of private property in the landed estates without compensation will also be impossible, for the landed estates are for the most part mortgaged to the banks, and the interests of the landlords and capitalists are inseparably interwoven.

The recent resolution of the Economic Section of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (*Rabochaya Gazeta*, No. 152) records not only the "banefulness" of the government's measures (such as the raising of the price of grain with the purpose of enriching the landlords and kulaks), not only "the fact of the *complete passivity* of the central bodies created by the government for the regulation of economic

life," but also the "*violation of the law*" by that government. Such an admission on the part of the ruling parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, is one more proof of the criminal nature of the policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie.

### **Measures Against the Counter-Revolution of the Landlords and Capitalists**

(6) The uprising of Kornilov and Kaledin was supported by the entire landlord and capitalist class, headed by the party of the Cadets (the "People's Freedom" Party). This has been fully proved by the facts published in the *Izvestiya* of the Central Executive Committee.

But nothing has been done to completely suppress this counter-revolution, or even to investigate it; and, indeed, nothing of any value can be done unless the power passes to the Soviets. No commission is capable of instituting a full investigation, of arresting the guilty, etc., unless it is endowed with governmental powers. This can and must be undertaken by a Soviet government alone. Only such a government, by arresting the Kornilovist generals and the leaders of the bourgeois counter-revolution (Guchkov, Milyukov, Ryabushinsky, Maklakov, etc.) by disbanding the counter revolutionary organisations (the State Duma, the officers' leagues; etc.) by placing their members under the surveillance of the local Soviets, and by disbanding the counter-revolutionary regiments, can make Russia secure against an inevitable repetition of "Kornilov" attempts.

Such a government alone can set up a commission for the purpose of a complete and public investigation of the



Kornilovist case, as well as of all other cases, even those against which action has already been started by the bourgeoisie; and only to such a commission would the Party of the Bolsheviks, in its turn, call upon the workers to give full obedience and co-operation.

Only a Soviet government can successfully combat such a flagrant injustice as the seizure by the capitalists, with the aid of the millions filched from the people, of the largest printing plants and the majority of the papers. The bourgeois counter-revolutionary papers (*Rech*, *Russkoye Slovo*, etc.) must be suppressed and their printing plants confiscated, private advertisements in the papers must be declared a state monopoly and transferred to the government paper published by the Soviets, which tells the peasants the truth. Only in this way can, and must, this powerful medium of unpunished lies and slander, serving to deceive the people, mislead the peasantry, and prepare for counter-revolution, be wrested from the hands of the bourgeoisie.

### Peaceful Development of the Revolution

(7) The democracy of Russia, the Soviets and the Socialist-Revolutionary and the Menshevik parties, are now confronted with the opportunity, very seldom to be met with in the history of revolution, of securing the convocation of the Constituent Assembly at the appointed date without further delay, of saving the country from military and economic catastrophe, and of securing a peaceful development of the revolution.

If the Soviets now take the full and exclusive power of the state into their own hands, with the purpose of

carrying out the programme set forth above, they will not only be guaranteed the support of nine-tenths of the population of Russia—the working class and the vast majority of the peasantry—but will also be guaranteed the great revolutionary enthusiasm of the army and the majority of the people, without which victory over famine and war is impossible.

There could be no question of resistance being offered to the Soviets now if they did not themselves vacillate. No class would dare to raise a rebellion against the Soviets, and the landlords and capitalists, chastened by the experience of the Kornilov affair, would peacefully surrender their power upon the ultimatum of the Soviets. In order to overcome the resistance of the capitalists to the programme of the Soviets, it would be sufficient to establish supervision by the workers and peasants over the exploiters and to punish recalcitrants by such measures as the confiscation of their entire property, coupled with a short term of imprisonment.

By seizing power now—and this is probably their last chance—the Soviets could still secure a peaceful development of the revolution, the peaceful election of deputies by the people, the peaceful struggle of parties within the Soviets, the testing of the programmes of the various parties in practice, and the peaceful transfer of power from party to party.

If this opportunity is allowed to pass, the entire course of development of the revolution, from the movement of May 3 to the Kornilov affair, points to the

inevitability of a bitter civil war between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Inevitable catastrophe will bring this war nearer. To judge by all the signs and considerations comprehensible to the human mind, this war is bound to terminate in the complete victory of the working class and its support by the poor peasantry in carrying out the programme set forth above. The war may prove arduous and bloody and cost the lives of tens of thousands of landlords and capitalists, and of army officers who sympathise with them. The proletariat will stop at no sacrifice in order to save the revolution, which is impossible apart from the programme set forth above. On the other hand, the proletariat would support the Soviets in every way if they were to avail themselves of their last chance of securing a peaceful development of the revolution.

October 9-10 1917

## PART II

(1)

### TO THE WORKERS, PEASANTS AND SOLDIERS

[This is an appeal addressed to the workers and peasants and soldiers by Lenin.

He warns them not to fall a prey to the deception of Kerensky who was negotiating with the Tsarist Generals—Kornilov, Denikin and others—to prevent the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies from seizing powers.

He exhorts them to act immediately and seize power not later than Nov. 7, and gives the slogan: "All Power to Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies."]

Comrades! The party of the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" to which Kerensky belongs, appeals to you in its paper *Dyei Norada* (of October 13) to "*be patient*."

"One must be patient," the paper writes in urging that power be left in the hands of Kerensky's government, in urging that power should not pass to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Let Kerensky rely on the landowners, capitalists and kulaks, let the Soviets that have carried through the revolution and vanquished the Kornilovist generals "*be patient*," we are told. Let them "*be patient*" until the speedy convocation of the Constituent Assembly.

Comrades! Look around, see what is happening in the village, what is happening in the army, and you will realise that the peasants and the soldiers cannot stand it any

*Not for one more day* are the people willing to suffer postponement. *Not for a single day longer* can we suffer the peasants to be quelled by armed force, thousands to perish in the war, when a just peace can and must be offered at once.

*Down with the government of Kerensky*, who is conspiring with the Kornilovist landowner generals to suppress the peasants, to fire on the peasants, to drag out the war!

*All power* to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers Deputies!

Written October 14-15, 1917

## THESES FOR A REPORT AT THE PARTY CONFERENCE, 30TH OCT. 1917

[These Theses were written to be considered by the Party Conference called for Oct 30, and were considered at the Petrograd City Conference, as the Central Committee had revoked the convocation of the Party Congress

The City Conference, represented by 49,000 Party members, resolved

"Only the Overthrow of the Kerensky Government and of the packed Soviet of the Republic and the substitution for it of a workers' and peasants' revolutionary government is capable of :—

1 Giving the land to the peasants, instead of suppressing the peasant uprising ,

2. Offering an immediate and just peace,

3. Adopting the most decisive revolutionary measures against the Capitalists in order to secure for the army bread, clothing and footwear and in order to fight against economic ruin.]

### **On the Question of the Party's Participation in the Pre-Parliament**

1. The participation of our party in the "pre-parliament," in the "Democratic Council," or in the "Council of the Republic" is an obvious error and a deviation from the proletarian-revolutionary road.

2. The objective situation is such that a revolution against Kerensky's Bonapartist government is undoubtedly rising in the country (peasant uprising, increasing dissatisfaction and conflicts with the government in the army and among national groups, conflict with railroad and postal employees, complete collapse of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary conciliators at the elections, etc.)

When the revolution is thus rising, to go to a make-believe parliament, concocted to deceive the people, means to facilitate this deception, to make the cause of preparing the revolution *more difficult*, to distract the attention and the forces of the party from the urgent task of struggle for power and for the overthrow of the government.

3. The party congress, therefore, must recall the members of our party from the pre-parliament, declare a boycott against it, appeal to the people to prepare forces for dispersing this "Bulygin Duma" of Tsereteli's.

### **On the Slogan of "All Power to the Soviets"**

1. All the work of the Bolsheviks in the revolution for half a year, all the criticism levelled by them against the

Mensheviks and S.-R.'s for their "conciliationism" and for the fact that those parties turned the Soviets into talking shops, demand on the part of the Bolsheviks a loyal adherence to that slogan in a straightforward Marxist way. Unfortunately, vacillations are to be noted at the top of party, a "fear," as it were, of the struggle for power, an inclination to substitute resolutions, protests, and congresses for this struggle.

2. All the experience of both revolutions, that of 1905 and that of 1917, as well as all the decisions of the party of the Bolsheviks, all its political declarations for many years, come down to the idea that the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies is real only as an organ of uprising, as an organ of a revolutionary power. Outside of this task, the Soviets are a meaningless plaything which inevitably leads to apathy, to sluggishness, to disappointment on the part of the masses who are justly sick of endless repetition of resolutions and protests.

3. Particularly now, when a peasant uprising is sweeping the country and is being suppressed by Kerensky with the aid of picked troops, when even the military measures in the village obviously threaten with fraudulent fixed elections to the Constituent Assembly, when even in Germany there has been a mutiny in the fleet, a refusal now on the part of the Bolsheviks to transform the Soviets into organs of uprising would be a betrayal both of the peasants and of the cause of the International Socialist Revolution.

4. The task of seizure of power by the Soviets is the task of a successful uprising. This is why all the best

forces of the party must be directed towards the factories and barracks in order that they may explain to the masses their task and in order that, taking their mood correctly into account, they may choose the proper moment for overthrowing the Kerensky government.

To insist on connecting this task with the Congress of Soviets, to subordinate it to this congress, means *to be merely playing at uprising* by setting a definite date beforehand, by making it easier for the government to prepare troops, by confusing the masses with the illusion that it is possible to solve, by means of a "resolution" of the Congress of Soviets, a task which only the rebellious proletariat is capable of solving by its own power.

5. It is necessary to fight against the constitutional illusions and against hopes placed in the Congress of the Soviets, to reject the preconceived idea of "waiting" for it at all hazards, to concentrate all strength on explaining to the masses the inevitability of an uprising, and on preparing it. The Bolsheviks have in their hands the Soviets of both capital cities: if they refused to carry out this task, and became reconciled to the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (which means a concocted Constituent Assembly) by the Kerensky government, they would reduce all their propaganda for the "Power to the Soviets" slogan to empty phrases and, politically, would cover themselves with shame as a party of the revolutionary proletariat,

6. This is particularly true now, when the Moscow elections have yielded to the Bolsheviks 49½ per cent of



the votes and when the Bolsheviks, supported by the Left S. R.'s, which support has long since become a fact have an undoubted majority in the country.

### **Note to the Resolution on "Power to the Soviets"**

Not everything in the thesis on "Power to the Soviets" ought to be published, but if we refuse to discuss within the party and to make clear to the masses unusually urgent and important problems, which cannot be fully discussed in the open due to the absence of full freedom of the press, or which cannot be openly brought before the enemy, it is tantamount to the party's losing its connections with the vanguard of the proletariat.

### **On the List of Candidates For the Constituent Assembly**

The list of candidates published by the Central Committee has been made up in an impermissible way and calls for the sharpest protest. For, in a peasant Constituent Assembly it is necessary to have four or five times more *workers*, who alone are capable of establishing close and intimate relations with the peasant deputies. It is also entirely impermissible to have a disproportionately large number of candidates from among persons with little experience, who have only recently joined our party (like J. Larin). In filling the list with such candidates who should have first worked for months and months in the party, the Central Committee opens the door wide for careerism, for hunting after berths in the Constituent Assembly. The list must be speedily revised and corrected.

### Note to the Thesis "On the List of Candidates For the Constituent Assembly

It goes without saying that, as far as the Interboroughites,\* who are very little experienced in proletarian work according to the *line* of our party, are concerned, nobody would argue, for instance, against such a candidacy as that of L. D. Trotsky ; for, in the first place, Trotsky immediately after his arrival took the position of an internationalist; secondly, he fought among the Interboroughites for fusion ; thirdly, in the grave July days, he proved equal to the task and a devoted adherent of the party of the revolutionary proletariat. This obviously cannot be said about a multitude of the new members of our party included in the list.

To propose Larin is particularly risky (especially when he is placed ahead of G. I. Petrovsky, N. V. Krylenko and others).

Inside of the Constituent Assembly, the establishment of a *rapprochement* with the peasants, a close, intimate hearty one, will require earnest work. Only workers who are close to the life of the peasants are good for this. To crowd the Constituent Assembly with orators, and literati means to follow the beaten track of opportunism and chauvinism. This is unworthy of the Third International.

Written October 14-20, 1917.

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\* An organisation of Internationalists in Petrograd, during the war, which joined the Bolshevik Party at the Sixth Party Congress, July, 1917.—Ed.

forces to exposing among the masses Kerensky's conspiracy with the imperialists of other countries and to preparing the uprising so that the proper moment for it is chosen.

P.S.—The resolution of the *Soldiers'* Section of the Petrograd Soviet against moving the government from Petrograd shows that among the soldiers the realisation of Kerensky's conspiracy is also *ripening*. We must gather all forces to support this *correct* realisation and to carry on propaganda among the soldiers.

I move that the following resolution be adopted :

"The Conference, having discussed the present situation, which is generally admitted to be highly critical, establishes the following facts :

"1. The aggressive operations of the German fleet, accompanied by the very strange inactivity of the English fleet and coupled with the Provisional Government's plan to move from Petrograd to Moscow, arouse a very strong suspicion that the Kerensky government (or, what is the same thing, the Russian imperialists behind him) has entered into a conspiracy with the English and French imperialists to surrender Petrograd to the Germans in order *thus* to suppress the revolution.

"2. These suspicions are greatly strengthened, and are being confirmed as much as is possible in such cases, owing to these facts :

"First, the conviction has long been growing and strengthening in the army that it was betrayed by the Tsarist generals, that it is also being betrayed by the generals of Kornilov and Kerensky (particularly in the surrender of Riga);

“Second, the Anglo-French bourgeois press does not conceal its fierce hatred for the Soviets, a hatred reaching the point of rage, and its readiness to annihilate them at the cost of any amount of blood ;

“Third, Kerensky, the Cadets, Breshkovskaya, Plekhanov and similar politicians are conscious or unconscious tools in the hands of Anglo-French imperialism, as completely proven by a half year’s history of the Russian Revolution :

“Fourth, the vague but persistent rumours of a separate peace between England and Germany ‘at the expense of Russia’ could not have arisen without cause ;

“Fifth, all the circumstances of the Kornilov conspiracy, as evidenced even by the admission of the papers *Dyelo Narada* and *Izvestiya*, which are generally in sympathy with Kerensky, have proven that Kerensky, is to a very large extent mixed up in the Kornilov affair, that Kerensky was and is the most dangerous Kornilovist ; Kerensky, in fact, has shielded the leaders of the Kornilov affair, such as Rodzyanko, Klembovsky, Maklakov, and others.

“Proceeding from these considerations, the Conference recognises that all the shouting of Kerensky, and the bourgeois papers supporting him, about defending Petrograd, is pure deception and hypocrisy, that the Soldiers’ Section of the Petrograd Soviet was perfectly right when it sharply condemned the plan of moving from Petrograd ; -furthermore, that to defend Petrograd and to save the revolution it is absolutely and most urgently necessary that the tired-out army be convinced of the sincerity of the

The railroad workers and the postal employees are engaged in a conflict with the government. It was over demand for increase in wages. This demand was rejected and resulted in a strike on all railroads. The strike was called off after four days when the government had granted the demands. Instead of the congress called for November 2, the Liberians already are speaking of one to be convened some time during the first ten days of November, etc., etc., .

To "wait" under such conditions is a crime.

The Bolsheviks have no right to wait for the Congress of Soviets; they must *take power immediately*. Thus they will save both the world revolution (for otherwise there is the danger of an agreement between the imperialists of all countries who, after the shooting in Germany, will be much more agreeable to each other and *will unite against us*) and the Russian Revolution (else a wave of real anarchy may become stronger *than we are*); thus they will also save the lives of hundreds of thousands of people engaged in the war.

To hesitate is a crime. To wait for the Congress of Soviets means to play a childish game of formality, a shameful game of formality; it means to betray the revolution.

If it is impossible to take power without an uprising, it is necessary immediately to *orientate upon an uprising*. It is quite possible that power can be taken at the present time without an uprising: if, for instance, the Moscow Soviet were immediately to take power and to declare itself (together with the Petrograd Soviet) the government.

Victory in Moscow is assured, as there is nobody there to fight. We can wait with Petrograd. The government can do nothing and cannot save itself ; it will surrender.

For when the Moscow Soviet takes over power, the banks, the factories, the *Russkoye Slovo*,\* it acquires a gigantic base and a power ; it carries on propaganda before all of Russia, putting the question in the following way : we offer *peace* tomorrow if the Bonapartist Kerensky surrenders (if he does not surrender, we will overthrow him). *Land* to the peasants *immediately* ; concessions to the railroad workers and postal employees *immediately*, etc.

It is not compulsory to "start" with Petrograd. If Moscow "starts" bloodlessly, it will undoubtedly be supported (1) by the sympathies of the army at the front ; (2) by the peasants everywhere ; (3) by the fleet and the troops in Finland *which are moving on Petrograd*.

Even if Kerensky has in the vicinity of Petrograd one or two cavalry corps, he will have to surrender. The Petrograd Soviet may bide its time, while carrying on propaganda in favour of the Moscow Soviet government. The slogan is : power to the Soviets, land to the peasants, peace to the peoples, bread to the hungry.

Victory is assured. and there are nine chances out of ten that it will be bloodless.

To wait is a crime against the revolution.

Greetings,

N. LENIN.

Written October 16.20, 1917.

\* Lenin advised the confiscation of this Poupier's Printing Plant. The Moscow Soviet carried out the advice immediately after the victory of the October Revolution

## PART III

(1)

# MATERIALS ON THE REVISION OF THE PARTY PROGRAMME

[At the All-Russian Party Conference in May, 1917 Lenin raised the question of the Revision of the Party Programme and had a commission appointed to go into the question.

The conference adopted the following resolution.

“The conference recognises the necessity of revising the Party Programme along the following lines.

(a) “A description of Imperialism in the era of imperialist wars in connection with the impending socialist revolution must be given; distortions of Marxism on the part of the ‘defencists who have forgotten Marx’s slogan’ ‘The Workers have no country,’ must be combated.

(b) “The postulates and paragraphs on the state must be altered so as to accord not with the demand for a bourgeois parliamentary republic, but with the demand for a democratic, proletarian-peasant republic i.e., a type of state in which there is no police, standing army, or privileged bureaucracy.

(c) “The antiquated portions of the political programme must be removed or corrected.

(d) “A number of points of the political programme must be revised so as to more clearly specify the more consistent democratic demands.

(e) "The antiquated economic parts of the minimum programme and the points dealing with national education must be thoroughly revised in many places.

(f) "The agrarian programme must be revised in accordance with the resolution adopted on the agrarian question.

(g) "The demand for the nationalisation of the syndicates, etc., which are mature for nationalisation must be inserted.

(h) "A description of the main currents in present-day Socialism must be added."

The Conference enjoined the Central Committee to draw up a draft Programme on these lines and submit the same within 2 months for ratification.

The conference also called upon all organisations, Party members etc., to discuss the draft programme, amend them or draw up counter-proposals.

[Lenin, basing on the materials of the conference, drew up a complete draft programme and in that he included his "Draft Revision of the Theoretical, Political and other Sections of the Programme," originally submitted to the Conference.]

### **Preface to the Pamphlet "Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme"**

The Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party ("Bolsheviks") has instructed the undersigned to publish immediately the material at present in the possession of the Central Committee relating to the revision of the Party programme.



This material consists of the following :

(a) The initial draft of changes to be made in the theoretical and political parts of the programme, submitted by the present writer to the All-Russian Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. on May 7-12, 1917, and examined so far, only by the commission appointed by the Conference for the detailed elaboration of this question.

(b) Comments on the draft, or in connection with the draft, made by the commission or by individual members of the commission.

(c) My reply to these comments.

(d) A complete draft of proposed changes in the economic minimum programme worked out at the Conference of May 7-12 (April 24-29), 1917, by the sub-commission on the protection of labour.

(e) A draft, accompanied by brief explanatory notes, of changes to be made in the clauses of the Party programme dealing with public education. This draft was drawn up by N. K. Krupskaya after the Conference

I am publishing this material together with brief notes, for I consider that the chief purpose of the Party in publishing this material at present is to secure the active participation of the greatest possible number of comrades in the work of drawing up the Party programme.

The proposed changes above enumerated, taken together, form the draft of the complete text of a new programme. I therefore give at the end of this pamphlet both the old and the new texts of the programme, arranged so as to present the reader with all the material in the

form most convenient for comparison and for the insertion of amendments.

Upon the instructions of the Central Committee, I appeal to all comrades, both members of the Party and sympathisers, to give the widest possible publicity to this material in Party publications, to bring it to the attention of *every* member of the Party, and to address all comments and proposals to the office of *Pravda* (Moika 32, Petrograd, attention of Central Committee, Material Relating to Programme Revision).

June 2, 1917.

### **Draft Revision of the Theoretical, Political and Other Sections of the Programme\***

At the end of the preamble to the programme (after the words "the standpoint of the proletariat") insert:

World capitalism has at the present time, *i.e.*, about the beginning of the twentieth century, reached the stage of imperialism. Imperialism, or the epoch of finance capital, represents a high stage of development of the capitalist economic system, one in which monopolist associations of capitalists—syndicates, cartels and trusts—have assumed decisive importance. enormously concentrated banking capital has fused with industrial capital; the export of capital to foreign countries has assumed enormous dimensions; the whole world has been divided up territorially among the richer countries, and the economic partitioning of the world among international trusts has begun.

Imperialist wars, *i.e.*, wars for the mastery of the world, for markets for bank capital and for the strangulating of small and

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\* It will be seen from "The Old and the New Texts of the Programme" given below where each of the amendments and additions proposed by Lenin belongs.—*Ed.*

weak nations, are inevitable under such a state of affairs. The first great imperialist war, the war of 1914-17, is precisely such a war.

The extremely high degree of development of world capitalism in general and the substitution of monopoly capitalism for free competition, the fact that the banks and also the capitalist combines have created an apparatus for the social regulation of the process of production and distribution of products, the rise in the cost of living and increased oppression of the working class by the syndicates due to the growth of capitalist monopolies, the enormous obstacles in the path of the economic and political struggle of the proletariat, the horrors of the imperialist war and the disaster and ruin caused by it—all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution.

That era has begun.

Only a proletarian socialist revolution can lead humanity out of the deadlock created by imperialism and imperialist wars. No matter what difficulties the revolution may have to encounter, and in spite of possible temporary set-backs or waves of counter-revolution, the final victory of the proletariat is inevitable.

Objective conditions make it the urgent task of the present era to prepare the proletariat in every way for the conquest of political power with the purpose of realising the political and economic measures that make up the content of the socialist revolution,

The fulfilment of this task, which requires the complete confidence, the closest fraternal ties and the direct unity of revolutionary action of the working class of all advanced countries, is impossible without an immediate rupture in principle with the bourgeois perversion of socialism which has gained the upper hand among the leadership of a vast majority of the official Social-Democratic parties. Such a perversion is, on the one hand, the social-chauvinist current, socialism in word and chauvinism in deed, the defence of the predatory interests of one's "own" national bourgeoisie concealed under the slogan of "national defence"; and, on the other hand, the equally wide and international current of the so-called "Centre,"

which stands for unity with the social-chauvinists and for the preservation or correction of the bankrupt Second International, and which vacillates between social-chauvinism and the revolutionary internationalist struggle of the proletariat for the achievement of a socialist system.

In the minimum programme, the whole preamble (from the words "On the path" down to 1) should be eliminated, and replaced by the following :

In Russia at the present moment, when the Provisional Government, which is part and parcel of the capitalist class and enjoys the confidence—necessarily unstable—of broad masses of the petty-bourgeois population, has undertaken to convene a Constituent Assembly—the immediate duty of the party of the proletariat is to fight for a system of state organisation which will best guarantee the economic progress and the rights of the people in general, and make possible the least painful transition to socialism in particular.

The party of the proletariat cannot rest content with a bourgeois parliamentary democratic republic, which throughout the world preserves and strives to perpetuate the monarchist instruments for the oppression of the masses, namely, the police, the standing army and the privileged bureaucracy.

The Party fights for a more democratic workers' and peasants' republic, in which the police and the standing army will be completely abolished and replaced by the universally armed people, by a universal militia ; all official persons will be not only elective, but also subject to recall at any time upon the demand of a majority of the electors ; all official persons, without exception, will be paid at a rate not exceeding the average wage of a competent worker ; parliamentary representative institutions will be gradually replaced by Soviets of people's representatives (from various classes and professions, or from various localities), functioning as both legislative and executive bodies.

The constitution of the Russian democratic republic must ensure :

1. The sovereignty of the people; the supreme power of the state must be vested entirely in the people's representatives, who shall be elected by the people and be subject to recall at any time, and who shall constitute a single popular assembly, a single chamber.

2. Add :

. . . Proportional representation at all elections : all delegates and elected officials, without exception, to be subject to recall at any time upon the decision of a majority of their electors.

3. Add :

. . . The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state.\*

The last sentence in 8 to read thus :

. . . The use of the native language in all local public and state institutions ; the abolition of an obligatory state language,

9 to be amended as follows :

The right of all nationalities forming part of the state to freely separate and to form independent states, The republic of the Russian people must attract other nations or peoples not by force, but exclusively by their voluntary consent to the creation of a common state. The unity and fraternal alliance of the workers of all countries cannot be reconciled with the direct or indirect exercise of force against other nationalities.

11 to read :

Election by the people of judges and other officials, both civil and military, with the right to recall any of them at any time by decision of a majority of their electors.

12 to read :

Replacement of the police and standing army by the universally armed people : manual and non-manual workers to receive regular

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See *Pravda*, No. 68. June 10 (May 28), 1917, F. Engels' discussion of the Marxist and consistently democratic view on the question of the appointment and confirmation of officials elected by the local population.

wages from the capitalists during time devoted to public service in the national militia.

After the fiscal section of the programme (following the words "on incomes and inheritances") insert :

The high level of development of capitalism in the banking business and in the trustified branches of industry, on the one hand, and the economic disruption caused by the imperialist war, everywhere provoking a demand for state and public control of the production and distribution of all important products, on the other, prompt the Party to demand the nationalisation of banks, syndicates (trusts), etc.

The agrarian programme to be formulated thus :

The beginning (from the words "in order to secure the abolition" to the words "Party demands") to be retained; the succeeding sections to be amended as follows :

(1) Fights with all its strength for the immediate and complete confiscation of all landed estates (and also appanages, church lands, etc., etc.);

(2) Stands for the immediate transfer of all land to the peasantry organised in Soviets of Peasants' Deputies or in other local government bodies elected on a truly democratic basis and completely independent of the landlords and bureaucrats;

(3) Demands the nationalisation of all land in the state; while implying the transfer of all property in land to the state, nationalisation entrusts the right of disposal of the land to the local democratic institutions;

(4) Upholds the initiative of the peasant committees that, in many localities of Russia, are transferring the livestock and agricultural implements of the landlords to the peasants organised

in these committees for the purpose of their socially regulated utilisation in the cultivation of the land.

(5) Advises the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians to strive for the formation out of every private state, of a sufficiently large model farm, to be conducted for the public account by the local Soviets of Agricultural Workers under the direction of trained agricultural experts and with the aid of the best technical appliances.

The Party under all circumstances, etc.--to the end of the paragraph ("exploitation").

The conclusion of the agrarian programme, from the words "The Party under all circumstances, and whatever the conditions of democratic agrarian reform may be" to the words "poverty and exploitation" to remain unchanged.

The whole concluding part of the programme, the last two paragraphs (from the word "In the endeavour to achieve" to the end) to be entirely eliminated.

Beginning of May 1917.

### **Concerning the Comments of the Commission of the April All-Russian Conference**

Regarding the comments on the preamble to the programme, I must say the following.

In my opinion, there is no need for a revision of the entire preamble to the programme. The plan for such a revision proposed by the commission seems to me theoretically incorrect.

In its present form the preamble contains a description and analysis of the most important and essential features

of capitalism as a social and economic system, Fundamentally, these features have not been changed by imperialism, the era of finance capital. Imperialism is a continuation of the development of capitalism, its highest stage—in a sense, a transition stage to socialism.

I cannot therefore regard the addition of an analysis of imperialism to the general analysis of the basic features of capitalism as “mechanical.” Imperialism, in fact, does not *and cannot transform* capitalism from top to bottom. Imperialism complicates and accentuates the contradictions of capitalism, it “entangles” monopoly with free competition, but *it cannot abolish* exchange, the market, competition, crises, etc.

Imperialism is capitalism which is withering but not yet withered, dying but not dead. Not pure monopolies, but monopolies in conjunction with exchange, markets, competition, crises—such is the essential feature of imperialism in general.

This is why it is theoretically wrong to delete an analysis of exchange, commodity production, crises, etc., in general and to “replace” it by an analysis of imperialism *as a whole*. There is no such whole. There is a *transition* from competition to monopoly, and therefore the programme would be much more correct, and much more true to reality, if it retained the general analysis of exchange, commodity production, crises, etc., and added a characterisation of the *growing* monopolies. It is, in fact, this combination of antagonistic principles, *viz.*, competition and monopoly, that is the essence of imperialism, it is this



that is making for the final crash, i.e., the socialist revolution.

Furthermore, in the case of Russia it would be incorrect to depict imperialism as an integral whole (imperialism in general is a disparate whole), since in Russia there are still many regions and many branches of labour that are in a state of transition from natural or semi-natural economy to capitalism. They are antiquated, they are weak, but, nevertheless, they exist, and under certain circumstances may introduce an element of delay in the collapse of capitalism.

The programme proceeds—as it should proceed—from the simplest to the more complex and “highest” phenomena of capitalism, from exchange to commodity production, to the crowding out of small industries by the larger ones, to crises and so forth up to imperialism, which is the highest stage of capitalism, only just grown up in the advanced countries. That is how matters stand in actual reality. To begin by placing “exchange” in general and the export of capital side by side is incorrect historically and incorrect theoretically.

Such are my objections to the comments of the commission.

Written in May, 1917.

### **The Old and the New Texts of the Programme**

For the purpose of an easier and more convenient comparison of the old and the new texts of the programme, both are printed below in the following manner:

The parts of the old programme which remain unchanged in the new are given in ordinary type.

*The parts of the old programme which have been completely omitted in the new programme are given in italics.*

**The parts of the new programme which were not in the old programme are given in bold type.**

*Programme of the Russian Social-Democratic  
Labour Party*

The development of exchange has established such close ties between all the nations of the civilised world that the great movement for the emancipation of the proletariat was bound to become—and has long since become—international.

Russian Social-Democracy regards itself as one of the detachments of the world army of the proletariat, and is striving for the same ultimate goal as the Social-Democrats of their countries. This ultimate goal is determined by the character of modern bourgeois society and by the course of its development. The principal specific feature of such a society is commodity production based on capitalist production relations, under which the most important and considerable part of the means of production and exchange of commodities belongs to a numerically small class of persons while the enormous majority of the population consists of proletarians and semi-proletarians who owing to their economic position are compelled permanently or periodically to sell their labour power, *i.e.*, to hire themselves to the capitalists and to create by their labour the income of the upper classes of society.

society into classes and thereby emancipate the whole of oppressed humanity, for, it will put an end to all forms of exploitation of one section of society by another.

A necessary condition for this social revolution is the dictatorship of the proletariat, *i.e.*, the conquest by the proletariat of such political power as will enable it to suppress all resistance on the part of the exploiters. Setting itself the task of making the proletariat capable of performing its great historic mission, international Social-Democracy organises the proletariat into an independent political party opposed to all the bourgeois parties, guides all the manifestations of its class struggle, reveals to it the irreconcilable antagonism between the interests of the exploiters and those of the exploited and explains to the proletariat the historical importance and the necessary conditions for the impending social revolution. At the same time it reveals to all the other toiling and exploited masses the hopelessness of their position in capitalist society and the necessity of a social revolution for the purpose of emancipating themselves from the yoke of capital. The Social-Democratic Party, the party of the working class, calls upon all strata of the toiling and exploited population to join its ranks in so far as they adopt the standpoint of the proletariat.

World capitalism has at the present time, *i.e.* about the beginning of the twentieth century, reached the stage of imperialism. Imperialism, or the epoch of finance capital, represents a high stage of development of the capitalists—syndicates, cartels and trusts—have assumed decisive importance; enormously con-

centrated banking capital has fused with industrial capital; the export of capital to foreign countries has assumed enormous dimensions; the whole world has been divided up territorially among the richer countries, and the economic partitioning of the world among international trusts has begun.

Imperialist wars, i.e., wars for the mastery of the world, for markets for bank capital and for the strangulation of small and weak nations, are inevitable under such a state of affairs. The first great imperialist war, the war of 1914-17, is precisely such a war.

The extremely high degree of development of world capitalism in general and the substitution of monopoly capitalism for free competition, the fact that the banks and also the capitalist combines have created an apparatus for the social regulation of the process of production and distribution of products, the rise in the cost of living and increased oppression of the working class by the syndicates due to the growth of capitalist monopolies, the enormous obstacles in the path of the economic and political struggle of the proletariat, the horrors of the imperialist war and the disaster and ruin caused by it—all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution.

That era has begun.

Only a proletarian socialist revolution can lead humanity out of the deadlock created by imperialism and imperialist wars. No matter what difficulties

the revolution may have to encounter, and in spite of possible temporary set-backs or waves of counter-revolution, the final victory of the proletariat is inevitable.

Objective conditions make it the urgent task of the present era to prepare the proletariat in every way for the conquest of political power with the purpose of realising the political and economic measures that make up the content of the socialist revolution.

\* \* \*

The fulfilment of this task, which requires the complete confidence, the closest fraternal ties and the direct unity of revolutionary action of the working class of all advanced countries, is impossible without an immediate rupture in principle with the bourgeois perversion of socialism which has gained the upper hand among the leadership of a vast majority of the official Social-Democratic parties. Such a perversion is, on the one hand, the social-chauvinist current, socialism in word and chauvinism in deed, the defence of the predatory interests of one's "own" national bourgeoisie concealed under the slogan of "national defence"; and, on the other hand, the equally wide and international current of the so-called "Centre," which stands for unity with the social-chauvinists and for the preservation or correction of the bankrupt Second International, and which vacillates between social-chauvinism and the revolutionary inter-

**national struggle of the proletariat for the achievement of a socialist system.**

*On the path to their common final goal, determined by the fact that the capitalist system of production dominates the whole civilised world, on the path to that goal the Social-Democrats of the various countries are obliged to set themselves varying immediate tasks, both because the capitalist system is not everywhere developed in the same degree, and because in different countries the social and political setting of its development is different.*

*In Russia, although capitalism has already become the prevailing mode of production, there still remain numerous relics of the former, pre-capitalist system, which was based on the feudal servitude of the toiling masses to the landlords, to the state, or to the head of the state.*

*Considerably hampering economic progress, these relics also hinder the full development of the class struggle of the proletariat: they help to preserve and intensify the most barbarous forms of exploitation of the vast peasant population on the part of the state and the propertied classes and to keep the people in a state of ignorance and subjection*

*The most considerable of these relics of the past, and the most powerful bulwark of this barbarism, is the tsarist autocracy. Its very nature obliges it to be hostile to every social movement and to be the bitterest opponent of every aspiration towards freedom on the part of the proletariat.*

*By reason of the above, the prime and immediate task which the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party sets itself is to overthrow the tsarist autocracy and to set up a democratic*

*republic in its place, the constitution of which would guarantee the following :*

**In Russia at the present moment, when the Provisional Government, which is part and parcel of the capitalist class and enjoys the confidence—necessarily unstable—of broad masses of the petty-bourgeois population, has undertaken to convene a Constituent Assembly—the immediate duty of the party of the proletariat is to fight for a system of state organisation which will best guarantee the economic progress and the rights of the people in general, and make possible the least painful transition to socialism in particular.**

**The party of the proletariat cannot rest content with a bourgeois parliamentary democratic republic, which throughout the world preserves and strives to perpetuate the monarchist instruments for the oppression of the masses, namely, the police, the standing army and the privileged bureaucracy.**

**The party fights for a more democratic workers' and peasants' republic, in which the police and the standing army will be completely abolished and replaced by the universally armed people, by a universal militia ; all official persons will be not only elective, but also subject to recall at any time upon the demand of a majority of the electors ; all official persons, without exception, will be paid at a rate not exceeding the average wage of a competent worker ; parliamentary representative institutions will be gradually replaced by Soviets of people's**

representatives (from various classes and professions, or from various localities), functioning as both legislative and executive bodies.

The constitution of the Russian democratic republic must ensure :

1. The sovereignty of the people ; the supreme power of the state must be vested entirely in the people's representatives, who shall be elected by the people and be subject to recall at any time, and who shall constitute a single popular assembly, a single chamber.

*1. The sovereignty of the people, i.e., the concentration of the supreme state power in the hands of a legislative assembly, consisting of the representatives of the people and constituting a single chamber.*

2. Universal, equal, and direct suffrage for all male and female citizens of twenty years of age or over in all elections to the legislative assembly and to the various local government bodies ; secret ballot ; the right of every voter to be elected to any representative institution ; biennial parliaments ; payment of people's representatives ; **proportional representation at all elections ; all delegates and elected officials, without exception, to be subject to recall at any time upon the decision of a majority of their electors.**

3. Local government on a wide scale ; regional government in all localities where the population is specific in composition and is distinguished by specific social condi-



tions : **the abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state.**

4. Inviolability of person and domicile.

5. Unhampered freedom of conscience, speech, press, assembly, strikes and combination.

6. Freedom of movement and occupation.

7. Abolition of the social orders. and equal rights for all citizens irrespective of sex, creed, race, or nationality.

8. The right of the people to receive instruction in their native tongue in schools established at the expense of the state and local government bodies; the right of every citizen to speak at assemblies in his native language; the use of the native language *equally with the state language* in all local, public, and state institutions; **the abolition of an obligatory state language.**

9. *The right of self-determination for all nationalities forming part of the state.*

9. The right of all nationalities forming part of the state to freely separate and to form independent states. The republic of the Russian people must attract other nations or peoples not by force, but exclusively by their voluntary consent to the creation of a common state. The unity and fraternal alliance of the workers of all countries cannot be reconciled with the direct or indirect exercise of force against other nationalities.

10. The right of all persons to see any official before an ordinary court of jury.

*11. Election of judges by the people.*

**11. Election by the people of judges and other officials, both civil and military, with the right to recall any of them at any time by decision of a majority of their electors.**

*12. Replacement of the standing army by the universally armed people.*

**12. Replacement of the police and standing army by the universally armed people; manual and non-manual workers to receive regular wages from the capitalist during the time devoted to public service in the national militia.**

**13. Separation of church from the state, and schools from the church: schools to be absolutely secular.**

*14. Free and compulsory general and vocational education for all children of both sexes up to the age of sixteen; poor children to be provided with food, clothing, and educational supplies at the expense of the state.*

**14. Free and compulsory general and technical education (familiarising the student with the theoretical and practical aspects of the most important branches of industry) for all children of both sexes up to the age of sixteen; education to be closely associated with the performance by children of socially productive labour.**

**15. Students to be provided with food, clothing, and educational supplies at the cost of the state.**

**16. Education to be entrusted to democratically elected local government bodies; the central govern-**

ment not to be allowed to interfere with the arrangement of the school curriculum, or with the selection of the teaching staffs ; teachers to be elected directly by the population itself with the right of the latter to remove undesirable teachers.

As a fundamental condition for the democratisation of the economic life of the state, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party demands the abolition of all indirect taxes and the establishment of a progressive tax on incomes and inheritances.

The high level of development of capitalism in the banking business and in the trustified branches of industry, on the one hand, and the economic disruption caused by the imperialist war, everywhere provoking a demand for state and public control of the production and distribution of all important products, on the other, prompt the Party to demand the nationalisation of banks, syndicates (trusts), etc.

In order to safeguard the working class against physical and moral deterioration, and in order to ensure the development of its ability to carry on the struggle for emancipation, the Party demands :

*1. An eight-hour working day for all wage workers.*

1. Limitation of the working day of all wage workers to eight hours, including a break of not less than one hour for meals where work is continuous. In dangerous and unhealthy industries the working day to be reduced to, from four to six hours.

2. A weekly uninterrupted rest period of not less than forty-two hours to be established by law for all wage workers of both sexes in all branches of national economy.

3. Complete prohibition of overtime work.

4. *Prohibition of night work (from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.) in all branches of national economy with the exception of those in which it is absolutely necessary on the grounds of technical considerations attested by labour organisations.*

4. Prohibition of night work (from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m.) in all branches of national economy with the exception of those in which it is absolutely necessary for technical considerations attested by labour organisations—provided, however, that night work shall not exceed four hours.

5. *Prohibition of the employment of children of school age (up to sixteen) and restriction of the working day of adolescents (from sixteen to eighteen) to six hours.*

5. Prohibition of the employment of children of school age (up to sixteen), restriction of the working day of adolescents (from sixteen to twenty) to four hours, and prohibition of the employment of adolescents on night work in unhealthy industries and in mines.

(6) *Prohibition of female labour in branches of industry injurious to the health of women ; women to be released from work for four weeks before and six weeks after childbirth, with retention of regular pay during this period.*

6. Prohibition of female labour in all branches of industry injurious to the health of women ; prohi-

bition of night work for women ; women to be released from work eight weeks before and eight weeks after childbirth, with retention of regular pay during this period and the receipt of free medical and pharmaceutical aid.

*7. Establishment of nurseries for infants and young children in all works, factories and other enterprises employing women ; nursing mothers to be allowed recesses of at least half-hour duration at intervals of not more than three hours.*

**7. Establishment of nurseries for infants and small children and rooms for nursing mothers in all works, factories and other enterprises employing women ; nursing mothers to be allowed recesses of at least half-hour duration at intervals of not more than three hours ; nursing mothers to be provided with material assistance and their working day to be limited to six hours.**

*8. State old age insurance and insurance against total or partial disability, to be covered by a fund formed by a special tax on the capitalists.*

**8. Full social insurance:**

**(a) for all forms of wage labour ;**

**(b) against every kind of disability, e.g., sickness, injury, infirmity, old age, occupational disease, childbirth, widowhood, orphanhood, and also against unemployment.**

**(c) all insurance institutions to be administered entirely by the insured themselves ;**

- (d) the expense of insurance to be borne by the capitalist ;
- (e) free medical and pharmaceutical treatment under the control of self-governing sick benefit societies, the management bodies of which are to be elected by the workers.

9 *Prohibition of wages in kind ; establishment of regular weekly pay-days in all labour contracts without exception ; wages to be paid in cash and during working hours.*

10. *Prohibition of deductions by employers from wages on any pretext or for any purpose whatsoever (fines, spoilage, etc.)*

11. *Appointment of an adequate number of factory inspectors in all branches of national economy ; factory inspection to be extended to all enterprises employing hired labour, government enterprises not excepted (domestic service also to be liable to inspection) ; women inspectors to be appointed in industries employing female labour ; representatives elected by the workers and paid by the state to participate in supervising the observance of the factory laws, the fixing of wage scales and the acceptance or rejection of raw materials and finished products.*

**(9) The establishment of a labour inspectorate elected by the workers' organisations and covering all enterprises employing hired labour, as well as domestic servants ; women inspectors to be appointed in enterprises employing female labour.**

12. *Local government bodies, assisted by representatives elected by the workers, to supervise the sanitary conditions of*

*dwelling assigned to workers by employers, as well as the internal regulations in force in such dwellings and the renting conditions, with the purpose of protecting wage workers against the interference of employers with their life and activities as private citizens.*

*13. Properly organised sanitary control over all undertakings employing hired labour, the medical and sanitary service to be entirely independent of the employers; free medical aid to the workers at the expense of the employers, with full pay during sickness.*

*14. Employers violating labour protection laws to be liable to criminal prosecution.*

**10. Sanitary laws for the improvement of hygienic conditions and the protection of the life and health of workers in enterprises employing hired labour; questions of hygiene to be entrusted to a sanitary inspectorate elected by the workers.**

**11. Housing laws to be enacted and housing inspectors elected by the workers' organisations for the purpose of supervising the sanitary condition of dwelling houses. However, only by the abolition of private ownership in land and the erection of cheap and hygienic dwellings can the housing problem be solved.**

**12. Industrial courts in all branches of national economy.**

*15. Industrial courts in all branches of national economy, composed of equal numbers of representatives from the workers' and employers' organisations.*

16. *Establishment of employment bureaux (labour exchanges) by local government bodies in all branches of industry for the hire of local and non-local workers, representatives of the workers and employers to participate in their administration.*

**13. Establishment of labour exchanges for the proper organisation of the placing of unemployed workers. The labour exchanges must be proletarian class organisations (and not organised on a parity basis), and must be closely associated with the trade unions and other working class organisations and financed by local government bodies.**

In order to secure the abolition of the relics of serfdom, which constitute a direct and heavy burden on the peasants, and in order to encourage the development of the class struggle in the countryside, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party demands :

1. *The abolition of all restrictions upon the person and property of peasants arising out of the system of social orders.*

2. *The abolition of all payments and duties imposed upon the peasants as a social order, and the cancellation of all debts of a usurious character.*

3. *The confiscation of church lands, monastery lands, and appanage and tsar's lands and their transfer (together with state lands) to the control of the higher local government bodies embracing urban and rural districts ; lands required for the migration fund, and also forests and waters of state importance, to be transferred to the democratic state.*

4. *The confiscation of private lands, with the exception of small land holdings, and their transfer to the control of the*



*higher democratically elected local government bodies. The minimum size of estates liable to confiscation to be determined by the higher local government bodies. While supporting all revolutionary action on the part of the peasantry, including the confiscation of the large estates of the landlords, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is absolutely opposed to all attempts to hinder the course of economic development. While striving for the transfer of confiscated lands to the democratic local government bodies in the event of a victorious development of the revolution, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party will, if circumstances prove unfavourable for such a transfer, declare itself in favour of dividing among the peasants landed estates on which small husbandry had previously been conducted or which are required in order to round out the peasants' holdings.*

**1. Fights with all its strength for the immediate and complete confiscation of all landed estates (and also appanages, church lands, etc., etc.);**

**2. Stands for the immediate transfer of all land to the peasantry organised in Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, or in other local government bodies. elected on a truly democratic basis and completely independent of the landlords and bureaucrats;**

**3. Demands the nationalisation of all land in the state; while implying the transfer of all property in land to the state, nationalisation entrusts the right of disposal of the land to the local democratic institutions;**

**4. Upholds the initiative of the peasant committees that, in many localities of Russia, are trans-**

fering the livestock and agricultural implements of the landlords to the peasants organised in these committees for the purpose of their socially regulated utilisation in the cultivation of the land ;

5. Advises the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians to strive for the formation out of every private estate of a sufficiently large model farm, to be conducted for the public account by the local Soviets of Agricultural Workers under the direction of trained agricultural experts and with the aid of the best technical appliances.

*Furthermore, the Party under all circumstances, and whatever the conditions of democratic agrarian reform may be, will unswervingly strive for the independent class organisation of the rural proletariat, will explain to the latter the irreconcilability of its interests with the interests of the peasant bourgeoisie, will warn it against the seduction of small husbandry, which, while commodity production exists, can never do away with the poverty of the masses, and, finally, will point out the necessity for a complete socialist revolution as the only means of abolishing poverty and exploitation.*

*In the endeavour to achieve its immediate aims, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party supports all oppositional and revolutionary movements directed against the existing social and political system in Russia, but at the same time vigorously repudiates all reformist projects providing for the extension or consolidation of the guardianship of the police and bureaucracy over the labouring classes.*

*For its part, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is firmly convinced that a complete, consistent and enduring realisation of the political and social reforms indicated can be achieved only by the overthrow of autocracy and by the convocation of a Constituent Assembly freely elected by the entire people.*

May 1917

(ii)

## TOWARDS THE REVISION OF PARTY PROGRAMME

[The Central Committee at its meeting of Oct. 18, 1917 elected a special Commission, headed by Lenin, to draft a Party Programme for the Conference called by the C. C. for Oct. 30. The Commission included Bukharin, Trotsky, Kamaney, Sokolinikov and Kollantai.

This article was written to be submitted to the conference.

In the opening paragraph Lenin refers to the Conference of May 7-12 which resolved on the necessity of a revision of the Party Programme. He particularly refers to "*The Materials on the Revision of the Party Programme*," compiled, edited and prefaced by him.

In order that the Reader might have a proper understanding of the whole question, this article is preceded by "*The Materials on the Revision of Party Programme*," with Lenin's Preface and the resolution of the Conference of May 7-12.]

The Special congress of the party, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks), called by the Central Committee for October 30, has on the agenda the revision of the party programme. The conference of May 7-12 passed a resolution on the necessity of such revision and indicated in eight points the direction which this revision should follow. Then, later, pamphlets were published in Petrograd and Moscow,\*\* which took up the question of revision, and on August 23 the Moscow journals *Spartak* published an article in No. 4 by Comrade N. I. Bukharin devoted to the same subject. Let us examine the points raised by the Moscow comrades.

## I

For the Bolsheviks, who all agree on the need for "evaluating imperialism and the epoch of imperialist wars in connection with the approaching Socialist Revolution" (§ 1 of the resolution of the conference of May 7-12), the main question in the revision of the party programme is the question of the methods of formulating a new programme. Should we round out the old programme by adding a characterisation of imperialism (I advocated this opinion in the Petrograd pamphlet), or should we change the whole text of the old programme? (This opinion was

See V. I. Lenin, *The Revolution of 1917, Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Book II, p. 410.—Ed.

\*\* *Materials on the Revision of the Party Programme*, edited and with a preface by N. Lenin. "Priboi" publishing house, 1917.

† *Materials on the Revision of the Party Programme*. Collection of articles by V. Milyutin, V. Sokolnikov, A. Lomov, V. Smirnov. Published by the Regional Bureau of the Moscow Industrial District of the R.S.-D.L.P., 1917.

expressed by the section which was formed at the April [May] Conference, and is now being advocated by the Moscow comrades.) This is the primary question confronting our party.

We have two drafts. One, proposed by me, rounds out the old programme with a characterisation of imperialism;\* the second, proposed by Comrade V. Sokolnikov,\*\* and based on the remarks of a committee composed of three persons (this committee was elected by the section which was formed at the April [May] Conference), changes the entire general part of the programme.

I also had occasion to express my opinion (in the above-mentioned pamphlet\*\*\*) concerning the theoretical incorrectness of the plan of revision indicated by the section. Let us see now how this plan is carried out in Comrade Sokolnikov's draft.

Comrade Sokolnikov has divided the general part of our programme into ten parts, giving each part or paragraph a number. We too will adhere to his numerical scheme so as to enable the reader to find the corresponding passages.

The first paragraph of the present programme consists of two propositions. The first declares that the labour movement has become international because of the development of exchange; the second that the Russian Social-Democracy considers itself as one of the detachments of

\* See V. I. Lenin, *The Revolution of 1917, Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Book I, pp. 825 ff.—*Ed.*

*Ibid.*, Book II, p. 412.—*Ed.*

\* *Ibid.*, Book I, p. 332.—*Ed.*

the army of the world proletariat. (Further on in the second paragraph the general ultimate aim of all Social-Democrats is mentioned.

Comrade Sokolnikov leaves the second proposition intact, while he replaces the first by a new one, adding to the point about the development of exchange an allusion to the "export of capital" and the transition of the struggle of the proletariat into "a world-wide Socialist revolution."

The immediate result is inconsistency, a mixture of *themes*, a confusion of two *types* of programme structure. One of the two: *either* we must begin with the characterisation of imperialism *as a whole*—and in that case not single out only the "export of capital," nor retain, as Comrade Sokolnikov does, the analysis of "the process of development" of bourgeois society in the *second* paragraph; or else leave the type of programme structure unchanged, *i.e.*, first explain why our movement has become international, what its general ultimate goal is how the "process of development" of bourgeois society is leading to this goal.

To make the inconsistency and lack of logic in Comrade Sokolnikov's formulation of the programme more evident, we will quote in full the opening sentences of the old programme:

The development of exchange has established such close ties among all the peoples of the civilised world that the great proletarian movement towards emancipation was bound to become—and has long since become—international.\*

Comrade S. is dissatisfied here with two circumstances: (1) speaking of the development of exchange, the pro-

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\* *Ibid.*,—*Ed.*

gramme describes an antiquated "period of development"; (2) after the word "civilised" Comrade S. puts an exclamation point and remarks that "the close ties between mother country and colony" are in our programme "not taken cognisance of."

"Can protectionism, tariff wars, imperialist wars, sever the ties of the proletarian movement?" queries Comrade S., and he himself answers: "If we are to believe the text of our programme, they can, for they sever the ties established by exchange."

Rather strange criticism. Neither protectionism, nor tariff wars "sever" exchange; they only change it temporarily or interrupt it at one point, permitting its continuation at another. Exchange has not been broken up by the present war; it is only hindered in some places and has shifted to other places, but it still *remains* an international tie. The most obvious proof is the course of exchange. This is first. And secondly, we read in Comrade Sokolnikov's draft: "The development of productive forces, which, on the basis of the exchange of goods, and the export of capital, draw all peoples into one world economy," etc. Imperialist war (in one place, for a time) also interrupts the export of capital, as well as exchange; therefore, Comrade Sokolnikov's "Criticism" may be used against *himself*.

Thirdly, in the old programme, the question came up as to why the labour movement "*has long since become*" international. It had unquestionably become such before the export of capital became the highest stage of capitalism.

To sum up : Comrade Sokolnikov inserted a *bit* of the definition of imperialism (the export of capital) where it is obviously *out of place*.

Moreover, the words "the civilised world" do not appeal to Comrade Sokolnikov, for, in his opinion, they refer to something peaceful and harmonious, and forget the colonies.

Quite the contrary. Speaking of the "civilised world," the programme points out the *un-harmoniousness*, the existence of uncivilised countries (this is a *fact*, while in Comrade Shokolnikov's draft things appear *much more harmonious*, for it speaks simply of "drawing all peoples into one world economy"!! As if all peoples were *equally* drawn into this one world economy! As if there existed no *serf* relationship between the uncivilised and the "civilised" peoples just exactly on the basis of "all peoples" being drawn "into one world economy"

Comrade Sokolnikov has really *weakened* the old programme in the two topics, he mentions. He emphasises internationalism much *less*. It is very relevant] for us to point out that it had sprung into being *long ago*, long before the era of finance capital. From his wording one might gather the impression of a *greater* "harmoniousness" with regard to colonies. It nevertheless remains a fact that the labour movement has so far unfortunately affected the civilised countries *only* ; for us to ignore this, is not at all becoming.

I would be ready to agree with Comrade S. had he demanded a *clearer* exposition of the exploitation of the colonies. That is really an *important* element in the



conception of imperialism. But in the first paragraph of Comrade Sokolnikov's draft, there is not one mention of it. Here various component parts of the conception, imperialism, are *scattered* in diverse places, to the detriment of consistency and clarity.

We shall soon see how Comrade Sokolnikov's *entire* draft suffers from this looseness and inconsistency.

## II

Let the reader observe the general arrangement and the sequence of topics in the various divisions of the old programme (we follow Comrade Sokolnikov's numerical scheme):

1. The labour movement has long since become international. We are one of its detachments.

2. The final goal of the movement is determined by the course of development of bourgeois society. The point of departure is private ownership of the means of production and the propertylessness of the proletariat,

3. The growth of capitalism. The crowding out of the small producers.

4. The growth of exploitation (woman labour, reserve army, etc.).

5. Crises.

6. The progress of technique; the growth of inequality.

7. Growing struggle on the part of the proletariat. Material conditions for the replacement of capitalism by Socialism.

8. The proletarian social revolution.

9. Its premise—the dictatorialship of the proletariat.

10. The task of the party—to lead the struggle of the proletariat for the social revolution.

I add another topic :

11. Capitalism has evolved to its highest stage (imperialism), and now the era of the proletarian revolution has begun.

Compare with this the order of *topics*—not isolated corrections in the text, but the topics themselves—in Comrade S.'s draft, and also the topics of his additions about imperialism :

1. The labour movement is international. We are one of its detachments. (Inserted: the export of capital world economy, the transition of the conflict in the world revolution ; i.e., a bit of the definition of imperialism is inserted.)

2. The final goal of the movement is determined by the course of development of bourgeois society. The point of departure is private ownership of the means of production and the propertylessness of the proletariat. (In the middle is inserted: omnipotent banks and syndicates, monopoly combines on a world scale ; i.e., another bit of the definition of imperialism is inserted.)

3. The growth of capitalism (woman labour, reserve army, foreign workers, etc.).

5. Crises and wars. Still another bit of the definition of imperialism is inserted: "attempts to partition the globe"; monopoly combines and the export of capital are

repeated once more ; to the phrase "finance capital" is added, in parentheses, "the product of a union of industrial and bank capital."

6. The progress of technique ; the growth of inequality. Yet another bit of the definition of imperialism is put in : high cost of living, militarism. Monopoly combines are mentioned again.

7. Growing struggle on the part of the proletariat. Material conditions for the replacement of capitalism by Socialism. In the middle is an interpolation, again reiterating : "monopoly capitalism," and pointing out how the banks and the syndicates have prepared the apparatus for social regulation, etc.

8. The proletarian social revolution. (A note, that it will bring an end to the rule of finance capital.)

9. Its premise—the dictatorship of the proletariat.

10. The task of the party—to lead the struggle of the proletariat for the social revolution. (In the middle is the interpolation that the latter is now on the order of the day.)

I believe that this comparative study clearly shows that Comrade Sokolnikov's draft is afflicted with the very faults resulting from "mechanical" additions so feared by some comrades. Without any logical sequence, mosaic-like, various bits of the definition of imperialism have been strewn throughout the work. There is no general and integral characterisation of imperialism. There are too many repetitions. The old canvas is preserved. Preserved also is the general plan of the old programme ; to point out

that the "ultimate goal" of the movement is "determined" by the nature of contemporary bourgeois society and *the course of its development*. But it is just this "course of development" which is not brought out; and the effect is that of crumbs from the definition of imperialism seeping in, and for the most part inappropriately.

Let us take the second paragraph. Here Comrade S. left unchanged the beginning and the end; the beginning states that the means of production are in the hands of a few people; the end, that the majority of the population are proletarians or semi-proletarians. *Right in the middle*, Comrade S. inserts a special proposition which states that "during the last quarter of a century the direct or indirect control of capitalistically-organised production has gone over into the hands of the all-powerful" banks, trusts, etc.

This is mentioned *before* the crowding out of the small producers by the big ones is brought up!! The latter is first mentioned in the *third* paragraph. But are not trusts the highest and latest manifestation of the very process of the crowding out of small-scale production by large-scale? Is it appropriate to speak first of trusts, and then of the crowding out of the small producer? Is it not a violation of logical sequence? For where did the trusts come from? Is this not an error in theory? How and why has control "gone over" into their hands? All this cannot be understood before the process of the crowding out of the small producer is made clear.

Let us take the third paragraph. The topic is the crowding out of small enterprises by large ones. Here too

Comrade S. retains the beginning (the increasing importance of vast enterprises) and the end (small producers are being crowded out). In the middle, however, he adds that vast enterprises "are merged into gigantic organisms which combine a whole series of consecutive steps of production and *exchange*." But this insertion deals with an entirely different topic, namely, the concentration of the means of production and the socialisation of labour by capitalism, the creation of material conditions for the replacement of capitalism by Socialism. In the old programme this topic is not brought up until the seventh paragraph.

Comrade S. adheres to the general plan of the old programme. He, too, speaks of the material conditions for the replacement of capitalism by Socialism *only in the seventh paragraph*. He also retains in the seventh paragraph mention of the concentration of means of production and the socialisation of labour!

What we have then is a bit of mention of concentration of capital, inserted a few paragraphs *before* the general, summarising, complete paragraph specially devoted to the subject. This is the height of illogicality and is likely to render the programme less intelligible to the masses.

### III

The fifth paragraph of the programme, the one dealing with crises, Comrade S. "subjects to a general revision." He finds that the old programme "sins in theory to achieve popularity" and "deviates from Marx's theory of crises."

Comrade S. suggests that the word "overproduction" used in the old programme be placed "at the basis of the explanation" of crises and that "such a view is more in keeping with the theory of Rodbertus which explains the origin of crises by insufficient consumption by the working class."

To what extent these searches of Comrade S. after theoretical heresy are unsuccessful, to what extent Rodbertus is dragged in *by the hair*, may be seen from a comparison of the old text with the new one proposed by Comrade S.

In the old text, *after* the mention of "technical progress," greater efficiency in the exploitation of labour, relative decrease in consumption by the workers, is the following :

"*Such* a state of affairs in the bourgeois countries, etc., renders the sale of goods produced in greater and greater quantities ever more difficult. *Overproduction*, with the resulting crises.....and periods of stagnation.....are the inevitable consequences....."

It is clear that overproduction is not at all used here as the "basis of the explanation" of crises, but that the origin of crises and periods of stagnation is only *described*. In Comrade Sokolnikov's draft we read the following :

The development of the productive forces which is going on within these contradictory forms, in which the conditions of production are in conflict with the conditions of consumption, the conditions for the realisation of capital with the conditions for its accumulation—this development, the cardinal purpose of which is pursuit of profits, has as its inevitable consequence acute industrial

crises and depressions which signify the cessation of the sale of goods, unaccountably produced in ever increasing quantities.

Comrade S. said precisely the same thing, because "the cessation of the sale of goods," produced in "ever increasing quantities," is exactly what we call *overproduction*. In vain does Comrade S. fear this word; there is nothing inaccurate in it. In vain does Comrade S. write that instead of "*overproduction*," "*underproduction*" might be used, with as much or more accuracy."

Well, just try to call the "cessation of the sale of goods," "produced in ever increasing quantities" "*underproduction*"! It cannot be done.

Rodbertusism does not at all consist in the use of the word "*overproduction*" (which alone *exactly describes* one of the profoundest *contradictions* of capitalism), but in the explanation of crises *merely* as the result of insufficient consumption by the working class. No, the old programme deduces crises *not* from insufficient consumption. It bases its explanation on "*such* a state of affairs in the bourgeois countries," as has been described in the preceding part of the programme and which consists of "technical progress" and of "the relative decrease in the demand for human labour power." Alongside of this the old programme speaks of "the ever growing competition on the world market."

Here something *basic* is said about the conflict of conditions for accumulation with conditions for realisation, and it said *much more clearly*. The theory is not at all "changed" here, as Comrade S. erroneously thinks. "to

gain popularity," but is presented clearly and popularly; this is a virtue.

Of crises, to be sure, one would write volumes, one might give a more concrete analysis of the conditions of accumulation, speak of the role of the *means of production*, of the transformation of surplus value and variable capital in the means of production into constant capital in articles of consumption, of the depreciation in constant capital due to new inventions, and so on, and so forth. But neither does Comrade S. make an effort to present all this!! His supposed correction of the programme consists only of the following :

1. Having preserved the plan of transition from the fourth to the fifth paragraph, from the reference to technical progress, etc., to crises, he *weakened the connection* between the two paragraphs by leaving out the words, "*such a state of affairs.*"

2. He added theoretical-sounding phrases about the conflict of the conditions of production with the conditions of consumption, and the conditions for realisation with the conditions for accumulation—phrases which are not incorrect but which do not express a new thought, for the paragraph before gives the basis of it even more clearly.

3. He adds "the pursuit of profit"—an expression hardly becoming the programme, and which is used here, we suspect, precisely "*to gain popularity,*" for *the same thought* is expressed several times in the phrases about "conditions for realisation" and production of "goods," etc.



4. He substitutes "depression" for "stagnation"; an unfortunate change.

5. He adds the word "anarchically" to the old text ("goods, anarchically produced in ever increasing quantities"). This addition is theoretically wrong, for "anarchicalness" or "planlessness," using an expression from the Erfurt Programme and contested by Engels, does not exactly characterise trusts.

Here is how Comrade S. puts it :

... Goods are anarchically produced in ever increasing quantities. Efforts of capitalistic combines (trusts and the like) to prevent crises by limiting production end in failure. . . .

But it is by trusts that goods are *not* produced anarchically, but according to a system of accounting. Trusts *not only* "limit" production. They do not make any *efforts* to prevent crises; there can be no such "efforts" by trusts. Comrade S. is guilty of a host of inaccuracies. What should have been said was: although trusts produce goods not anarchically but according to a system of accounting, crises nevertheless cannot be averted because of the abovementioned characteristics of capitalism which also are inherent in the trusts. And if trusts, in periods of greatest prosperity and speculation, limit production in the sense of being careful "not to go too far," then at best they only succeed in saving the largest enterprises; but crises come just the same.

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' Engels criticised the expressions "private production" and "planlessness" in the draft of the Erfurt Programme. He wrote: "If we go over from stock companies to trusts, which dominate and monopolise certain branches of industry, this thereby stops not only private production, but also planlessness." (127)

Summarising all that was said above on the question of crises, we come to the conclusion that Comrade S. has *not* improved upon the old programme. On the contrary, the new draft contains inaccuracies. The necessity for changing the old programme remains unproved.

## IV

On the question of wars of an imperialist nature, the draft of Comrade S. commits theoretical transgressions in two respects.

First, he does not evaluate the present war. He says that the imperialist epoch generates imperialist wars. This is correct and should of course have been said in the programme. But this is not enough. Besides this, it is necessary to say that the present war, 1914-1917, in particular, is imperialist. The German group *Spartacus* in their "thesis" published in German, in 1915, advanced the proposition that in an era of imperialism, *there cannot be* any nationalist wars. (128) This is obviously a wrong assertion, for imperialism makes the oppression of nations more acute and as a result of this, national revolts and nationalist wars (attempts to draw a line of demarcation between revolts and wars are doomed to failure) are not only possible and probable but downright inevitable.

Marxism demands an absolutely exact evaluation of each separate war on the basis of concrete data. To evade the question of the present war by resorting to general discussions, is wrong in theory and inadmissible in practice. This method is used by the opportunists, they hide behind it, they use it as a loop-hole. In general, they say, impe-

rialism is an epoch of imperialist wars, but *this* war has not been *wholly* imperialist (thus argued, for instance, Kautsky).

Secondly, Comrade S. *links* "crises and wars," as if they were a two-in-one companion of capitalism in general, and of modern capitalism in particular. In pages 20 and 21 of *his* Moscow pamphlet, Comrade S. repeats the "crises and wars" combination in his draft, *three times*. Here it is not only a question of the undesirability of repetitions in the programme. It is also a question of incorrectness in principle.

Crises in the shape of overproduction, or "cessation of the sale of goods," if Comrade S. insists on banishing the word overproduction, are phenomena which are an *exclusive* property of capitalism. But wars are also characteristic of the slave and serf systems of economy. Imperialist wars also occurred on the basis of slavery (the war between Rome and Carthage was on both sides, an imperialist war), (129) as well as in the middle ages and in the epoch of mercantile capitalism. Each war in which *both* warring sides oppress foreign countries or nationalities, fighting for the division of the loot, and for "who should oppress and rob more," cannot be called anything but imperialist.

If we should say that only modern capitalism, only imperialism, has brought with it imperialist wars, it would be correct, for the *preceding* stage of capitalism, the stage of free competition, or the stage of pre-monopoly capitalism, was characterised in Western Europe pre-eminently by *nationalist* wars. But should we say that in the preceding stage there were no imperialist wars at all, it would

be incorrect. It would mean that we had forgotten the "colonial" wars, which are *also* imperialist. This is first of all.

And secondly, the *linking up* of "crises and wars" is particularly incorrect, for these are phenomena of entirely different kinds, different historical origin, and different class significance. For instance, one must not say, as Comrade S. says in his draft, that "both crises and wars, in turn, ruin the small producers still more, still more increase the dependence of hired labour on capital..." For wars are *possible* which would be fought for the emancipation of hired labour from the yoke of capitalism. In the course of the struggle of wage workers against the capitalist class, wars of a revolutionary and not only of a reactionary imperialist nature are possible. "War is the continuation of the politics" of this or that class; and in every class society, slave, of feudal, or capitalist, there have been wars which continued the politics of the oppressed class. This is exactly why one should not say, as Comrade S. says, that "crises and wars prove that the capitalist system changes from an agent for the development of productive forces into a hindrance to it."

That the present imperialist war, by its reactionary character and the hardships it entails, revolutionises the masses and accelerates the revolution, is true and should be emphasised. And that imperialist wars in general are *typical* of an imperialist epoch, is also true and may be mentioned. But this may not be said of *all* "wars" in general, and, moreover, under no circumstances should crises and wars be tied up together.

## V

We must draw our conclusions on the chief question which, according to the unanimous decision of the Bolsheviks, should more than any other question be fully elucidated and evaluated in the new programme. Comrade S. maintains that such elucidation and evaluation could be more expediently given piecemeal, so to speak, dividing up the various characteristics of imperialism among various paragraphs of the programme. I think it would be more to the purpose to present it in a special paragraph or special part of the programme, by gathering together everything that there is to say about imperialism. The members of the party have both drafts now before them, and the conference shall decide. We are in full accord with Comrade S. in that imperialism must be dealt with. What we must find out is whether there are differences of opinion as to *how* imperialism should be elucidated and evaluated.

From this point of view let us examine the two drafts of the new programme. In my draft there are presented five main distinguishing features of imperialism: (1) capitalist monopoly combines; (2) the fusion of banking and industrial capital; (3) the export of capital into foreign countries; (4) the territorial partition of the globe, already completed; (5) the partition of the globe among international economic trusts. (In my pamphlet *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism* which came out after the *Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme*, these five distinguishing features of imperialism are cited.)\*

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\*See Vol. I Lenin, *War and Revolution*, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX.—Ed

In Comrade Sokolnikov's draft we actually find the same five basic features, so that on matters of principle there is apparently complete agreement within our party—as was to be expected, for the practical agitation of our party with regard to this question, whether by word of mouth or in print, has long since, from the very beginning of the war, manifested the thorough unanimity of all the Bolsheviks on this fundamental question.

What is left to be examined is how the two drafts differ in the *formulation* of the definition and characterisation of imperialism. Both drafts point out concretely the moment which may be properly regarded as the one in which capitalism becomes transformed into imperialism. The necessity for such a statement in the interests of precision and correct historical evaluation of economic development would hardly be denied. Comrade S. says: “during the last quarter of a century”; I say: “approximately since the beginning of the twentieth century.” In the above-mentioned pamphlet on imperialism, I have cited the testimony of one economist who has made a special study of cartels and syndicates. According to him, the turning point towards the *complete* victory of the cartels was the crisis of 1900-1903. That is why, it seems, it would be more accurate to say: “approximately since the beginning of the twentieth century.” It would be more correct for still another reason. The specialist just cited, and all European economists in general, work with data supplied by Germany, and Germany, was *far ahead* of other countries in the process of forming cartels.

Furthermore, of monopolies my draft says; "Capitalist monopoly combines have assumed decisive importance." Comrade S. calls attention to monopoly combines *several times*. Only once is he comparatively definite:

. . . During the last quarter of a century the direct and indirect control of capitalistically organised production has passed into the hands of the all-powerful, interlocking banks, trusts and syndicates which have formed world-wide monopoly combines under the direction of a handful of magnates of finance capital,

Here, it appears, there is too much "propaganda." "To gain popularity" there is injected into the programme something that has no place there. In newspaper articles, in speeches, in popular pamphlets, "propaganda" is indispensable! The programme of a party, however, must be distinguished by its economical preciseness! It must contain nothing superfluous. The statement that "capitalist monopoly combines have assumed decisive importance" seems to me more exact; it says all that is necessary. Besides much superfluous matter, the above-quoted excerpt from Comrade Sokolnikov's draft contains expressions questionable in theory, for instance, "control of capitalistically organised production." Is it only capitalistically organised? No. This is too weak. Even production not capitalistically organised—petty craftsmen, peasants, small cotton-growers in the colonies, etc., etc.—have become dependent on banks and finance capital in general. If we speak of "world capitalism" in general (and this is the only kind of capitalism we can discuss here without falling into error), then by saying that a "decisive importance" was assumed by capitalist monopoly combines, we do not exclude *any* producers from this

decisive importance. To limit the influence of monopoly combines to "capitalistically organised production" is incorrect.

Furthermore, in his draft, Comrade S. speaks twice of the role played by banks: once in the above-quoted excerpt, and a second time in the paragraph dealing with crises and wars, where he defines finance capital as "the product of a fusion of industrial and banking capital." My draft says that "enormously Concentrated banking capital has fused with industrial capital." To say it once in the programme is sufficient.

The third characteristic: "the export of capital into foreign countries has grown to colossal dimensions" (thus reads my draft). In Comrade Sokolnikov's draft, we find one simple reference to the "export of capital" in one place, while in another place, and in an entirely different connection, we read of "new countries which are fields for the exploitation of capital in search of super-profits." It is difficult for us to accept the assertion regarding super-profits and new countries. The export of capital has also taken place from Germany into Italy, from France into Switzerland, etc. Under imperialism, capital has begun to be imported into the old countries as well, and not for *super*-profits only. What is true with regard to the new countries is not true with regard to the export of capital in general.

The fourth characteristic is what Hilferding has called "the struggle for economic territory." This title is *not* exact, for it does not give the main distinguishing feature of modern imperialism as compared to the older forms of



the struggle for economic territory. Ancient Rome fought for such territories; the kingdoms of sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe fought for and conquered colonies; also old Russia in her conquest of Siberia, etc. The distinguishing feature of modern imperialism is the fact (as pointed out in my draft) that "the whole globe has been territorially partitioned among the richest countries," *i.e.*, the partitioning of the earth among various states has been completed. This circumstance is the cause of the sharp conflicts for a re-partitioning of the globe, and is the cause of sharp collisions which lead to war.

All this is expressed in Comrade Sokolnikov's draft with great prolixity but hardly with theoretical accuracy. But before I quote his statement of the case, I will first touch upon the last characteristic of imperialism, *i.e.*, the economic partitioning of the globe. Here is how this is expressed in my draft: "The economic partitioning of the world among international trusts has begun." The data of political economy and statistics do not warrant any more elaborate statement. *This* partitioning of the world is a very important process, but it has just begun. Imperialist wars due to *this* partitioning, or rather *re-partitioning* of the world, come about once the territorial devision is complete, *i.e.*, when there are *no* more "free" lands that can be grabbed without war with a rival nation.

Let us see now how Comrade S. formulates this part of the programme :

But the realm of capitalist relations becomes ever wider; it is carried across boundaries, into new lands. These lands serve the capitalists as markets for goods, as sources of raw materials, as fields for the utilisation of capital in search of super-profits. The vast

accumulation of surplus value at the disposal of finance capital (a product of the fusion of industrial and banking capital) is dumped upon the markets of the world. The rivalry of powerful nationally and at times internationally organised combines of capitalists for the supremacy of the market, for the possession of the control of territories of weaker countries, *i.e.*, for the exclusive right to oppress them mercilessly, inevitably leads to attempts at dividing up the whole world among the richest capitalist countries, to imperialist wars, which generate universal suffering, ruin, and degeneration.

Here we have too many words, covering up a series of theoretical errors. One cannot speak of "attempts" at dividing up the world, because the world has *already* been divided up. The war of 1914-1917 is not "an attempt at dividing up the world," but a struggle for the *re-partitioning* of a world already divided. The war became inevitable for capitalism, because a few years before it imperialism divided up the world according to evaluations of force which are now out of date, and which are now being "rectified" by the war.

The struggle for colonies (for "new lands"), and the struggle for "the possession of territories of weaker countries," all existed *before* imperialism. Modern imperialism is characterised by *something else*, namely, by the fact that at the beginning of the twentieth century the whole earth was divided up and occupied by various countries. That is why the *re-partition* could only take place at the price of a world war. "Internationally organised capitalist combines" existed also *before* imperialism. Every joint-stock company with a membership of capitalists from various countries is an "internationally organised capitalist combine."

*Something quite different, something which did not exist before the twentieth century, is the distinguishing feature of imperialism, namely, the economic partitioning of the world among international trusts, the partitioning of countries, by agreement, into spheres of influence. This particular point has not been expressed in the draft of Comrade S, so that the power of imperialism is represented as much weaker than it really is.*

Finally, it is theoretically incorrect to speak of the dumping upon the world market of accumulated *surplus value*. This reminds one of Proudhon's theory of realisation, according to which capitalists may easily realise on fixed and on variable capital, but find themselves in difficulties when it comes to realising on surplus value. As a matter of fact capitalists cannot realise without difficulties and crises either on surplus value or on variable and fixed capital. Goods are dumped upon the market which are not only accumulated value, but also value reproducing variable capital and fixed capital. For instance, stocks of rails or iron are thrown into the world market, and are expected to be exchanged for articles consumed by the workers, or in other means of production (wood, oil, etc.).

## VI

Having thus concluded our analysis of Comrade Sokolnikov's draft, we must note one very valuable addition which he proposes and which in my opinion should be adopted and even extended. To the paragraph which deals with technical progress and the growth of the employment of woman and child labour, he proposes to add the

phrase "as well as the labour of unskilled foreign workers imported from backward countries." This addition is valuable and necessary. The exploitation of *worse paid* labour from backward countries is particularly characteristic of imperialism. On this exploitation rests, to a certain degree, the *parasitism* of rich imperialist countries which bribe a part of their workers with higher wages while shamelessly exploiting without limit the labour of "cheap" foreign workers. To the words "worse paid" should be added the words "and frequently deprived of rights"; for the exploiters from civilised countries always take advantage of the fact that the imported foreign workers have no rights. This may be observed in Germany with regard to the workers imported from Russia; in Switzerland, to Italians; in France, to Spaniards and Italians, etc.

It would be more expedient, perhaps, to emphasise more strongly and to express more vividly in our programme the prominence of the little group consisting of the richest imperialist countries which parasitically prosper by robbing colonies and weak nations. This is an extremely important characteristic of imperialism. To a certain extent it facilitates the rise of powerful revolutionary movements in countries subjected to imperialist plunder, and in danger of being crushed and partitioned by the giant imperialists (such as Russia). On the other hand, this future of imperialism tends to a certain extent to prevent the rise of profound revolutionary movements in countries which prosper on the imperialist exploitation of many colonies and foreign lands; thus allowing a (com-

paratively) very large portion of the population in such countries to participate in the division of the imperialist loot.

I would therefore suggest that the point which calls attention to the exploitation of a number of weak countries by the richest ones should be inserted in that section of my draft where social chauvinism is depicted." The corresponding passage in the draft would then assume the following form (the additions are in italics):

Such a perversion is, on the one hand, the tendency toward social-chauvinism, Socialism in words, chauvinism in deeds, the use of the slogan "national defence" for the purpose of protecting the predatory interests of "their own" national bourgeoisie *by means of imperialist war ; for the purpose of maintaining the privileged position of citizens of rich nations which make enormous profits by pillaging colonies and weak nations.* On the other hand, the equally wide and international movement of the "centre," etc.

It is necessary to add the words "by means of imperialist war" for greater accuracy. "National defence" is nothing but a slogan to justify war, to recognise it as legitimate and just. There are all kinds of wars. There may be also revolutionary wars. We must therefore say precisely what we mean: imperialist war. This is of course implied, but to avoid misinterpretation, it must not be implied, but stated directly and clearly.

## VII

From the general or theoretical part of the programme we shall now turn to the minimum programme. Here we at once encounter the ostensibly "very radical" but really

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See V. I. Lenin, *The Revolution of 1917, Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Book I, p. 336.—*Ed.*

very groundless proposal of Comrades N. Bukharin and V. Smirnov *130 completely to throw out* the minimum programme. The division, they claim, into maximum programme and minimum programme is out of date. What need of it, *once we speak of a transition into Socialism?* We need no minimum programme. Our programme must concentrate on transitional measures towards Socialism.

This is the proposal of these two comrades. For some reason, they have not ventured to offer their own draft (although since the revision of the party programme was on the agenda of the next conference of the party, these comrades have really been under the obligation to work out such a draft). It is possible that the authors of the ostensibly "radical" proposal have themselves halted in indecision.....Whatever the case may be, their opinion should be examined.

War and economic ruin have forced all countries to advance from monopoly capitalism to state-monopoly capitalism. This is the situation objectively. In a revolutionary period, however, state-monopoly capitalism is *directly* transformed into Socialism. During a revolution it is impossible to move forward without moving towards Socialism—this is the objective situation created by war and revolution. It was taken cognisance of by our April Conference, which put forward the slogans, "a Soviet Republic" (the political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat), and the nationalisation of banks and syndicates (a basic measure in the transition towards Socialism). Up to this point all the Bolsheviks unanimously agree. But Comrades Smirnov and Bukharin want to go farther,

to *completely* throw out the minimum programme. This is contrary to the wise counsel of the wise proverb, "Do not boast when riding to battle; boast when you return from it."

We are riding to battle, that is, we are fighting for the conquest by our party of political power. This power would be the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorest peasants. In taking this power, we are not at all afraid of stepping beyond the boundaries of the bourgeois system; on the contrary, we declare clearly, directly, precisely, and openly that we shall step beyond these boundaries, that we shall fearlessly march towards Socialism, that our road shall be through a Soviet Republic, through nationalisation of banks and syndicates, through workers' control, through universal labour duty, through nationalisation of the land, confiscation of the landowners' livestock and implements, etc. In this sense we drafted our programme of transitional measures towards Socialism.

But we must not boast when riding to battle, we must not discard the minimum programme, for this would be equivalent to an empty boast: we do not wish to "demand anything ourselves, we do not wish to work on petty details within the framework of *bourgeois* society."

This would be an empty boast, because first of all we must win power, which has not yet been won. We must first realise the transitional measures towards Socialism, we must bring our revolution to the triumph of the universal Socialist revolution, and only then, "*returning from battle,*" may we discard the minimum programme as of no further use.

Is it possible to guarantee now that the minimum programme is not needed any more? Of course not, for the simple reason that we have not yet reached the world-wide Socialist revolution.

We must firmly, courageously, and without hesitation *advance* towards our goal, but it is ludicrous to declare that we have reached it. Discarding the minimum programme would be equivalent to declaring, to announcing (to bragging, in simple language) that we have already conquered.

No, dear comrades, we have not yet conquered.

We do not know whether our victory will come tomorrow or a little later. (I personally am inclined to think that it will be to-morrow—I am writing this on October 19, 1917—and that there is danger of being too late in our seizure of power; still, tomorrow is tomorrow and not today) We do not know how soon after our victory revolution will sweep the West. We do not know whether or not our victory will be followed by temporary periods of reaction and the victory of the counter-revolution—there is nothing impossible in that—and therefore, after our victory, we shall build a “triple line of trenches” against such a contingency.

All this we do not know and *cannot know*. No one is in a position to know. It is therefore ridiculous to discard the minimum programme, which is *indispensable* while we still live within the framework of bourgeois society, while we have not yet destroyed this framework, not yet realised the basic prerequisites for a transition to Socialism, not yet smashed the enemy, the bourgeoisie, and even if we have



smashed them we have not yet annihilated them. All this will come, and perhaps much sooner than many people think (I personally think that it *will begin* tomorrow), but it *has not come yet*.

Take the minimum programme in the political sphere. This programme is limited to the bourgeois republic. We add that we do not confine ourselves to its limits, we start forth immediately upon a struggle for a higher type of republic, a *Soviet Republic*. This we must do. With unshakable courage and determination we must advance towards the new republic. But the minimum programme should under no circumstances be discarded, for, first of all, there is *as yet* no Soviet Republic; secondly, the possibility of "attempts at restoration" is not yet eliminated—the latter must be first outlived and vanquished; thirdly, during the transition from the old to the new, temporary "combined types" (as *Rabochy Put* has correctly pointed out) are possible—for instance, a Soviet Republic together with a Constituent Assembly.<sup>131</sup> Let us first get it over with; then we will have time to discard the minimum programme.

The same in the economic sphere. We all agree that the *fear* of marching towards Socialism is the most contemptible *treason* to the cause of the proletariat. We all agree that among the first and cardinal steps to be taken, must be measures such as the nationalisation of banks and syndicates. Let us first realise this and other similar measures, and *then we shall see*. Then we shall be able to see *better*, for practical experience will widen our horizon immeasurably, which is worth a million times more than

the best of programmes. It is possible, and even probable, nay, indubitable, that without transitional "combined types" the change will not take place. For instance, petty economies with one or two hired labourers could not be nationalised or subjected to immediate workers' control at short notice. Their role would be insignificant, it is true; they would be bound hand and foot by the nationalisation of banks and trusts, but so long as there still are even small cases of bourgeois relations, why dispense with the minimum programme? As Marxists, daring to carry on the greatest revolution in the world, but at the same time taking sober accounts of the facts, we have no right to dispense with the minimum programme.

By letting it go we should prove that before we have conquered we have already lost our heads. And we must not lose our heads either before our victory, or during our victory, or after it; for if we lose our heads, we lose everything.

In his concrete proposals Comrade Bukharin said nothing essentially new. He only repeated what had been said long before concerning the nationalisation of banks and syndicates. Comrade Smirnov in his article offered a very interesting and instructive series of exemplary reforms. These may be reduced to the regulation of production and consumption of commodities. In a general way all this is contained in my draft, followed by an "etc." To go further, to venture into a discussion of separate and concrete measures, seems to me inexpedient. *After the* basic measures of the new type have been taken, *after the* nationalisation of banks, *after the* beginning of workers'

control, many things will become clearer; experience will teach us *a great deal*, for it will be the experience of millions, the experience in building a new order of society with the conscious participation of millions. It stands to reason that the pointing out of the new, the developing of plans, their evaluation, the working over of the local and **partial** experiences of various supply committees and soviets, etc., is all very useful work. But to inject into the programme an overdose of detail is premature and may become even harmful by tying our hands with details. Our hands must be free so that we may build the new with greater vigour, once we have fully entered upon the new path.

## VIII

Comrade Bukharin's article touches upon another question worthy of consideration.

. . . The question of the revision of our party programme should be bound up with the question of working out a single programme for the international party of the proletariat.

This is not very clearly expressed. If we take it to mean that the author advises us not to accept a new programme until a single international programme, a programme of the Third International, is established, then we should have to object to this opinion most decisively. To postpone it on this account (I presume that there are no other reasons for delay; no one, for instance, demanded a postponement on account of inadequate preparation for the revision of our party materials) would be equivalent to *our* delaying the establishment of the Third International.

The establishment of the Third International ought not of course to be understood formally. Not until the proletarian revolution has triumphed in at least one country, or until the war has come to an end, may we hope for a speedy and successful movement towards the convoking of a *great* conference of revolutionary internationalist parties of various countries; nor for their consent to a formal adoption of a new programme. In the meanwhile we must advance our cause on the initiative of those parties which are now more favourably situated than the others and are in a position to take the first step—not viewing it, to be sure, as the last step, not opposing necessarily their programme to other “Left” (*i.e.*, revolutionary internationalist) programmes, but working directly towards the formulation of a general programme. Outside of Russia there is at present not a country in the world where there is comparative freedom for internationalists to meet, and where there are so many comrades well informed on subjects concerning international movements and programmes as there are in our party. This is why we must take the initiative upon ourselves. This is our immediate duty as internationalists.

Apparently Comrade Bukharin views this matter in exactly the same way. At the beginning of the article he says that “the party conference which has just been concluded” (it was written in August) “recognised the necessity of revising the programme” and that “a special conference will be called for this purpose.” We conclude from this that Comrade Bukharin has no objections to the adoption of a new programme. 132.

If so, then we have perfect unanimity on this question. Hardly any one would be against the proposition that our conference, upon adopting a new programme, express a desire to create a general programme for the Third International, and take certain steps in that direction, for instance, the hastening of the conference of the Lefts, the publication of a collection of articles in several languages, the forming of a committee for the purpose of collecting material dealing with what has been done in other countries and for the purpose of "feeling out" (according to the correct expression of Comrade Bukharin) a way for a new programme (the "Tribunists" <sup>133</sup> in Holland, the Lefts in Germany). The Socialist Propaganda League in America <sup>134</sup> has already been mentioned by Comrade Bukharin; we may also mention the American Socialist Labour Party and its demand that "the political state give way to industrial democracy." <sup>135</sup>

Comrade Bukharin has pointed out a flaw in my draft which I must acknowledge to be absolutely correct. He cites a passage in the draft\* where I discuss the present moment in Russia, the capitalist Provisional Government, etc. Comrade Bukharin is right in criticising the passage and saying that it should be transferred to the resolution on tactics or into the platform. I therefore propose either to leave out the last paragraph altogether, or to put it as follows :

Striving for a system of state organisation which would best secure economic progress and the rights of the people as a whole, and

\* See V. I. Lenin. *The Revolution of 1917, Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Book I, p. 336.—*Ed.*

also make the transition to Socialism as painless as possible, the party of the proletariat cannot confine itself, etc.

Finally, one question raised by a few comrades, but not yet discussed in the press, should be taken up here. This is the question of § 9 of our political programme, on the right of nations to self-determination.<sup>136</sup> This point consists of two parts: the first part is a new statement of the right to self-determination; the second contains not a demand but a declaration. The question is whether a declaration is in place here. Generally speaking, there is no place for declarations in a programme. Here, however, an exception to the rule is necessary. Instead of the word self-determination, which caused numerous misinterpretations, I propose the perfectly precise concept: "the right of free secession." After a half year's revolutionary experience of 1917, it is hardly possible to dispute that the party of the revolutionary proletariat of Russia, the party which uses the Great Russian language, is obliged to recognise the right of smaller nations to secede. If we win power, we shall immediately and unconditionally recognise this right with regard to Finland, the Ukraine, Armenia, and any other nationality oppressed by tsarism (and the Great Russian bourgeoisie). On the other hand, we do not at all want secession. We want as vast a state, as close a tie, as great a number of nations who are neighbours of the Great Russians, as possible; we desire this in the interests of democracy and Socialism, in the interests of attracting into the struggle of the proletariat the greatest possible number of toilers from different nations. We desire *revolutionary-proletarian unity, unification, and not secession*. We desire *revolutionary unification*; that is why

our slogan does not call for unification of all states in general, for the social revolution demands the unification *only* of those states which have gone over or are going over to Socialism, colonies which are gaining their freedom, etc. We want *free* unification; that is why we are obliged to recognise the right to secede (without freedom of secession, unification cannot be called free). We are the more obliged to recognise the right of secession, for the reason that *tsarism* and the Great Russian bourgeoisie have left by their oppression an abyss of bitterness and distrust of the Great Russians generally in the hearts of the neighbouring nations, and this must be eradicated *by deeds* and not by words.

But we want unification, and this must be stated. It is so important to say this in the programme of a party within a heterogeneous state that to get it in it is necessary to abandon custom and to incorporate a declaration. We want the republic of the Russian (I am even inclined to say Great Russian, for this is more correct) people to *attract* other nations to it. But how? Not by violence, but solely by voluntary agreement. Otherwise the unity and the brotherly ties of the *workers* of all countries are broken. In contradistinction to the bourgeois democrats, we call for the brotherhood of *workers* of all nationalities, and not the brotherhood of nations, for we do not trust the bourgeoisie of all countries; we regard them as our enemies.

This is why we should allow here an exception to the rule by inserting in § 9 a *declaration of principles*.

## IX

The foregoing pages were written before No. 31 of *Rabochy Put* appeared with Comrade J. Larin's article "The Labour Demands of Our Programme."<sup>137</sup> We hail this article as the beginning of discussion of the various programme drafts by our central organ. Comrade Larin dwells especially on that section of the programme which I had no occasion to work upon, and the draft for which is in the possession of the editors of the "Sub-section of Labour Protection," the sub-section formed at the conference of May 7-12, 1917.<sup>138</sup> Comrade Larin proposes a series of *additions* which seem to me quite acceptable but which, I am sorry to say, are not always very well expressed.

One point is particularly ineptly formulated by Comrade Larin: "The correct (?) distribution of working forces on the basis (?) of democratic (?) self-government by the workers in the distribution (?) of their persons (?)." In my opinion this is worse than the formulation of the sub-section: "The organisations for the distribution of labour must be proletarian class organisations," etc. Moreover, the problem of a minimum wage should have been gone into much more thoroughly. His proposition should have been formulated with greater exactness, and should have been *related to the history* of the views of Marx and Marxism on this subject.

Furthermore, Comrade Larin thinks that the political agrarian parts of the programme should have been "more carefully edited." We do hope that our party press forthwith begins to discuss the question of *editing* this or



that demand, without waiting for the conference, for, firstly, otherwise we shall not have a well prepared conference, and secondly, every one who has had occasion to work over programmes and resolutions knows how often a careful *editing* of a certain point discloses and eliminates vagueness and disagreements of principle.

Finally, concerning the financial and economic part of the programme, Comrade Larin writes that "instead of it, there is an almost vacant space. There is not even a reference to the annulment of war debts, and the debts contracted by tsarism" (only tsarism?), "the struggle against the fiscal utilisation of state monopolies, etc." It is extremely desirable for Comrade Larin not to postpone his proposals in anticipation of the conference. He should bring them up immediately, else we shall not be sufficiently prepared for the conference. In the question of the annulment of state debts (and of course, not only those of tsarism, but also those of the bourgeoisie) we must thoroughly thrash out the question of small bond-holders. As to the question about "the struggle against the fiscal utilisation of state monopolies," we must consider the state of affairs in the case of monopoly of the production of articles of luxury, and the connection of the proposed point with the demands of the programme for the abolition of all indirect taxes.

I repeat: in order seriously to prepare our programme, to insure the actual co-operation of the entire party, all those interested must *immediately* get busy and *publish* their suggestions as well as their *precise drafts* of points already edited, containing additions and changes.

Written October 19-21, 1917.

## PART IV

### (i)

## ADVICE FROM AN OUTSIDER

[On July 19, the Provisional Government issued order for the arrest of Lenin, indicted by the Prosecutor of the Petrograd Judicial Chamber under Articles 51, 100 and 138 part I of the Criminal Code (Treason and organisation of Armed Uprising.)

He was forced to live in hiding and carry on his work—collaborating on Bolshvick papers sending in leading political articles and smaller notes and thus keeping in touch with the Central Committee.

The challenge to this indictment was the election of Lenin to the Chair of the 6th Congress.

This letter was written from Vylborg where he was in hiding at that time.

This letter played an important role in deciding on the Armed uprising.]

I am writing these lines on October 21, and I have little hope that they will be in the hands of the Petrograd comrades before the 22nd. It is possible that they will arrive too late, for the Congress of the Northern Soviets has been fixed for October 23. However, I shall try to give my "advice from an outsider," in case the anticipated action of the workers and soldiers of Petrograd and vicinity will take place soon, but has not yet taken place.

That all power must pass to the Soviets is clear. It must also be beyond dispute for every Bolshevik that the revolutionary-proletarian (or Bolshevik, which is now the same thing) power is guaranteed the greatest sympathy and the most loyal support of all the toilers and exploited of all the world in general, in the belligerent countries in particular, and above all among the Russian peasantry. It is not worth while to dwell on these truths that are too well known and have long since been proven.

We must dwell on that which is not quite clear to all the workers, namely, that the passing of power to the Soviets means at present in reality an armed uprising. This would seem self-evident, but not every one has been and is giving earnest thought to this. To renounce an armed uprising at present would mean to renounce the chief slogan of Bolshevism ("All Power to the Soviets") and all revolutionary proletarian internationalism generally.

Armed uprising, however, is a *special* kind of political struggle, subject to special laws, to which we must give our serious attention. Karl Marx expressed this truth in a remarkably striking manner when he wrote that the armed "*uprising like war, is an art.*"

As the chief rules applicable to this art Marx advanced the following:

1. Never *play* at uprising, but once it is begun, remember firmly that you have to *go to the very end*.

2. It is necessary to gather a *great preponderance of forces* in a decisive place at a decisive moment, else the

enemy, being in a position of better preparation and organisation, will annihilate the insurgents.

3. Once the uprising has been begun, one must act with the greatest decisiveness, one must take the offensive, absolutely, and under all circumstances. "Defence is the death of an armed uprising."

4. One must strive to take the enemy by surprise, to take advantage of a moment when his troops are scattered.

5. One must try *daily* for at least small successes (one may even say hourly, when it is a question of one city), thus maintaining under all circumstances a "*moral superiority*."

Marx summarised the lessons of all revolutions concerning the armed uprising in the words of the greatest master of revolutionary tactics in history, Danton: "Audacity, more audacity, and still more audacity."

Applied to Russia and to October, 1917, this means a simultaneous offensive, as sudden and swift as possible, on Petrograd, by all means, from inside *and* from outside, from the workers' section *and* from Finland, Reval, and Cronstadt, an offensive by the *whole* fleet, the accumulation of a *gigantic preponderance of forces* over the fifteen to twenty thousand (perhaps even more) of our "bourgeois guard" (military cadets), our "Vendee troops" (a part of the Cossacks), etc.

Combine our three main forces: the fleet, the workers, and the army units, so as surely to occupy and hold, *no matter what the cost*: (a) the telephone exchange; (b) the main telegraph office; (c) the railroad stations; and above all (d) the bridges.

Pick the most resolute elements (our "shock" elements and the *young workers* ; and also the best sailors) into small detachments, to occupy all the most important points, and to *participate* everywhere, in all the important operations, for instance :

Surrounding Petrograd and cutting it off, taking it by a combined attack by the fleet, the workers, and the army—this is a task which demands *art* and *triple daring*.

Forming detachments from the best workers with rifles and bombs, to advance and surround the "centres of the enemy" (the military schools, the telegraph and telephone centres, etc.); their watchword must be : *Let all die, but do not allow the enemy to pass.*

Let us hope that in case the action is decided upon the leaders will successfully apply the great teachings of Danton and Marx.

The success of both the Russian and the world revolution depends upon two or three days of struggle.

AN OUTSIDER.

Written October 21, 1917.

(ii)

## A LETTER TO BOLSHEVIK COMRADES OF THE NORTHERN REGIONAL CONGRESS OF THE SOVIETS

[For the first time, Lenin introduces the phrase : Delay means Death, i.e., Delay of Armed uprising will mean the death of the Revolution.

This letter full of convincing arguments based on facts won the delegates to the path and programme of Lenin.]

Comrades ! Our revolution is passing through a highly critical time. This crisis coincides with the great crisis of a growing worldwide Socialist revolution and of a struggle against it by world imperialism. The responsible leaders of our party are confronted with a gigantic task ; if they do not carry it out, it will mean a total collapse of the internationalist proletarian movement. The situation is such that delay truly means death.

Look at the international situation. The growth of an international revolution is beyond dispute. The outburst of indignation among the Czech workers has been suppressed with unbelievable brutality, which indicates that the government is extremely frightened. In Italy things have come to a mass upheaval in Turin. Most important, however, is the mutiny in the German navy.<sup>140</sup> You must picture to yourselves the enormous difficulties of a revolution in a country like Germany, especially under the present circumstances. It cannot be doubted that the mutiny in the German navy is a sign of the great crisis of the rising world revolution. While our chauvinists who preach Germany's defeat demand a sudden rising of the German workers, we Russian revolutionary internationalists know from the experience of 1905-1917 that one cannot imagine a more imposing sign of a rising revolution than a mutiny among the troops.

Think of what position we now find ourselves in before the German revolutionists. They can tell us, " We have one Liebknecht who openly called for a revolution. His

voice has been stifled behind iron bars. We have not a single paper openly to bring out the necessity of a revolution. we have no freedom of assembly. We have not a single Soviet of Workers' or Soldiers' Deputies. Our voice hardly reaches the real broad masses. Still, we have made an attempt at uprising, having perhaps one chance in a hundred. But you, Russian revolutionary internationalists, have behind you half a year of free propaganda; you have a score of papers; you have a number of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies; you have gained the upper hand in the Soviets of both capitals; you have on your side the entire Baltic fleet and all the Russian troops in Finland, and still you do not respond to our call for an uprising, you do not overthrow your imperialist Kerensky when you have ninety-nine chances in a hundred of seeing your uprising victorious."

Yes, we shall be real betrayers of the International if, at such a moment, under such favourable conditions, we reply to such a call of the German revolutionists by mere resolutions.

Add to it that we all know perfectly well of the rapid growth of plotting and conspiracy of the international imperialists against the Russian Revolution. To stifle it at any price, to stifle it both by military measures and by a peace at the expense of Russia—this is what international imperialism approaches ever closer. This is what particularly sharpens the crisis of a world-wide Socialist revolution; this is what renders our hesitancy in the matter of an uprising particularly dangerous—I would almost say criminal.

Take, further, the internal situation of Russia. The bankruptcy of the petty-bourgeois conciliation parties that express the unconscious confidence of the masses in Kerensky and the imperialists in general, is an obvious fact. That bankruptcy is complete. The voting of the Soviet delegation at the Democratic Conference against a coalition, the voting of a *majority* of local Soviets of Peasant Deputies (in spite of their Central Soviet were the Avksentyevs and other friends of Kerensky's are seated) against a coalition, the elections in Moscow where the working population is closest to the peasantry and where over 49 per cent voted for the Bolsheviks (and among the soldiers fourteen out of seventeen thousand)---doesn't all this mean a total collapse of the confidence of the masses of the people in Kerensky and the conciliators headed by Kerensky and Co.? Can you imagine that the masses of the people could say still more clearly than they said to the Bolsheviks by this vote, "Lead us, we'll follow you"?

And we, having thus won the majority of the masses of the people to our side, having conquered the Soviets of both the capitals, shall we wait? What for? Wait till Kerensky and his Kornilovist generals deliver Petrograd to the German's thus entering, directly or indirectly, openly or covertly, into a conspiracy both with Buchanan and Wilhelm to completely stifle the Russian Revolution?

That the people, by the Moscow vote and by the re-elections to the Soviets, have expressed confidence in us, is not the whole story. There are signs of a growing apathy and indifference. This is easily understood. It means, not an ebbing of the revolution, as the Cadets and



their henchmen declare, but an ebbing of confidence in resolutions and elections. In a revolution, the masses demand of the leading parties action, not words; victories in the struggle, not talk. The moment is drawing near when the opinion may develop among the people that the Bolsheviks are no better than the others, since they do not know how to act when confidence in them is expressed. . .

Throughout the whole country, the peasant uprising is flaring up. It is perfectly clear that the Cadets and their satellites are minimising it in every way, reducing it, as they do, to "pogroms" and "anarchy." This lie is refuted by the fact that, in the centres of the uprising, the land is given over to the peasants; never have "pogroms" and "anarchy" led to such splendid political results! The tremendous power of the peasant uprising is proven by the fact that both the conciliators and the Socialist-Revolutionaries in the *Dyelo Naroda*, and even *Breshko-Breshkovskaya* have begun to speak of giving the land to the peasants, in order to stop the movement before it has engulfed them.<sup>141</sup>

Shall we wait until the Cossack units of the Kornilovist Kerensky (who just now has been exposed as a Kornilovist by the S. R.'s themselves) have succeeded in suppressing this peasant uprising *piecemeal*?

It seems that many leaders of our party have not noticed the *specific* meaning of that slogan which we all recognised and repeated without end. This slogan is, "All Power to the Soviets." There were periods, there were moments during a half year of revolution, when this slogan did not mean uprising. Those periods and those

moments seem to have blinded some of our comrades and made them forget that, at present and for us, at least beginning from the middle of September, this slogan is *tantamount to a call to uprising*.

There can be not the shadow of a doubt about this. The *Dyelo Naroda* recently explained this "in a popular way" when it said: "Kerensky will never submit!" Of course not!

The slogan, "All Power to the Soviets!" is nothing but a call to uprising. The blame will fall on us, fully and unconditionally, if we, who for months have called the masses to uprising, to repudiating conciliation, fail to lead those masses to an uprising on the eve of a collapse of the revolution, after the masses have expressed their confidence in us.

The Cadets and conciliators try to scare us with the example of July 16-18, with the growth of Black Hundred propaganda, etc. Still, if any mistake was made on July 16-18, it was only that we did not seize power. I think that this was not a mistake at that time, for at that time we were not yet in a majority; at present, however, this would be a fatal mistake, it would be worse than a mistake. The growth of Black Hundred propaganda is easily understood as a sharpening of the extremes in the atmosphere of a developing proletarian and peasant revolution. But to make of this an argument *against* an uprising is ridiculous, for the impotence of the Black Hundreds, bribed by the capitalists, the *impotence of the Black Hundreds in the struggle*, does not even require any proof. In a struggle, Kornilov and Kerensky can have the support

only of the "Wild Division" and the Cossacks. At present demoralisation has set in also among the Cossacks; besides, the peasants are threatening them with civil war within their Cossack territories.

I am writing these lines on Sunday, October 21. You will read them not earlier than October 23. I have heard from a passing comrade that people travelling on the Warsaw rail road say, "Kerensky is leading the Cossacks to Petrograd!" This is perfectly plausible, and it will be our direct fault if we do not verify it carefully and study the strength and the distribution of the *Kornilovist troops of the second draft*.

Kerensky has again brought the Kornilovist troops before Petrograd in order to prevent the passing of power to the Soviets, in order to prevent the immediate offer of peace by this power, to prevent giving the whole land to the peasantry immediately, in order to deliver Petrograd to the Germans while he himself runs off to Moscow! This is the slogan of the uprising which we must circulate as widely as possible and which will have tremendous success.

We must not wait for the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which the Central Executive Committee may postpone till November; we must not tarry, meanwhile allowing Kerensky to bring up still more Kornilovist troops. Finland, the fleet and Reval are represented at the Congress of Soviets. Those, together, can bring about an immediate movement towards Petrograd and against the Kornilovist regiments, a movement of the fleet, the artillery, the machine guns and two or three army corps, such as have proven in Vyborg all their hatred for the

Kornilovist generals with whom Kerensky is again in collusion.

It would be the greatest error if we failed to seize the opportunity to break up at once the Kornilovist regiments of the second draft, for fear that, in leaving for Petrograd, the Baltic fleet might expose the front to the Germans. The slanderous Kornilovists will say this, as they will tell any lie at all, but it is not worthy of revolutionists to be frightened by lies and slander. Kerensky will deliver Petrograd to the Germans, this is now as clear as daylight; no assertion to the contrary can shake our full conviction that it is so, because it follows from the entire course of events and from all of Kerensky's policies.

Kerensky and the Kornilovists will deliver Petrograd to the Germans. In order to save Petrograd, Kerensky must be overthrown and power must be seized by the *Soviets of both capitals*. These Soviets will immediately offer peace to all the peoples and thereby fulfil their duty before the German revolutionists; they will thereby make a decisive step towards frustrating the criminal conspiracies against the Russian Revolution, the conspiracies of international imperialism.

Only the immediate movement of the Baltic fleet, of the Finnish troops, of Reval and Cronstadt against the Kornilovist troops near Petrograd, is capable of saving the Russian and the world revolution. Such a movement has ninety-nine chances in a hundred of bringing about within a few days the surrender of one section of the Cossack troops, the destruction of another section, and the over-

throw of Kerensky, since the workers and the soldiers of both capitals will support such a movement.

Delay means death.

The slogan, "All Power to the Soviets!" is a slogan of uprising. Whoever uses this slogan without meaning uprising, without considering uprising, let him blame himself. We must be able to treat uprising as an art—on this I insisted during the Democratic Conference, on this I insist now, because *this* is what Marxism teaches us, this is what the present situation in Russia and in the whole world teaches us.

It is not a question of voting, of attracting the "Left Socialist-Revolutionaries," of gaining additional provincial Soviets, of holding the congress. It is a question of an uprising which can and must be decided by Petrograd, Moscow, Helsingfors, Cronstadt, Vyborg and Reval. *Near Petrograd* and in Petrograd—this is where this uprising can and must be decided upon and carried out as earnestly as possible, with as much preparation as possible, as quickly as possible, as energetically as possible.

The fleet, Cronstadt, Vyborg, Reval, can and must advance on Petrograd, crush the Kornilov regiments, arouse both capitals, start a mass agitation for a power which would immediately give the land to the peasants, immediately offer peace, overthrow Kerensky's government, create such a power.

Delay means death.

N. LENIN.

Written October 21, 1917.

## PART V

### (i)

## FROM THE MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

[The C. C. mainly devoted itself to the question of Armed Uprising at its meeting on 23rd Oct.

Lenin was present at the meeting for the first time after the July events, besides Zinoviev, Kamenev, Trotsky, Stalin, Sverdlov, Uritsky, Dzerzhinsky, Kollontai, Bubnov, Sokolnikov and Lomov.

During the discussions Uritsky dwelt upon the weak state of the forces of the Revolution. In spite of this, Lenin's resolution (given in the minutes) was adopted by 10 votes to 2—Kamenev and Zinoviev opposing.

This meeting created a political bureau for political guidance during the immediate future consisting of Lenin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Trotsky, Stalin, Sokolnikov and Bubnov.]

### I

Lenin states that since the beginning of September a certain indifference towards the question of uprising has been noted. He says that this is inadmissible, if we earnestly raise the slogan of seizure of power by the Soviets. It is, therefore, high time to turn attention to the technical side of the question. Much time has obviously been lost.

Nevertheless, the question is very urgent and the decisive moment is near.

The international situation is such that we must take the initiative.

What is being planned, surrendering as far as Narva and even as far as Petrograd, compels us still more to take decisive action.

The political situation is also effectively working in this direction. On July 16-18, decisive action on our part would have been defeated because we had no majority with us. Since then, our upsurge has been making gigantic strides.

The absenteeism and the indifference of the masses can be explained by the fact that the masses are tired of words and resolutions.

The majority is now with us. Politically, the situation has become entirely ripe for the transfer of power.

The agrarian movement also goes in this direction, for it is clear that enormous efforts are needed to subdue this movement. The slogan of transferring the entire land has become the general slogan of the peasants. The political background is thus ready. It is necessary to speak of the technical side. This is the whole matter. Meanwhile we, together with the defensists, are inclined to consider a systematic preparation for an uprising as something like a political sin.

To wait for the Constituent Assembly, which will obviously not be for us, is senseless, because it would make our task more complex.

We must utilise the regional congress and the proposal from Minsk to begin decisive action.

## II

**Resolution**

The Central Committee recognises that the international situation of the Russian Revolution (the mutiny in the navy in Germany as the extreme manifestation of the growth in all of Europe of the world-wide Socialist revolution; the threat of a peace between the imperialists with the aim of crushing the revolution in Russia) as well as the military situation (the undoubted decision of the Russian bourgeoisie and of Kerensky and Co. to surrender Petrograd to the Germans) and the fact that the proletarian parties have gained a majority in the Soviets; all this, coupled with the peasant uprising and with a shift of the people's confidence towards our party (elections in Moscow); finally, the obvious preparation for a second Kornilov affair (the withdrawal of troops from Petrograd; the bringing of Cossacks to Petrograd; the surrounding of Minsk by Cossacks. etc.)—places the armed uprising on the order of the day.

Recognising thus that an armed uprising is inevitable and the time perfectly ripe, the Central Committee proposes to all the organisations of the party to act accordingly and to discuss and decide from this point of view all the practical questions (the Congress of the Soviets of the northern region, the withdrawal of troops from Petrograd, the actions in Moscow and in Minsk, etc.).



(ii)

FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
ON OCT. 29, 1917

[This meeting, as the previous one, was convened specially for the "purpose of securing exact information as to the sentiments of the masses of workers and soldiers and the clearing up of the attitude of the active Petrograd and Moscow workers towards the armed uprising."

At this momentous meeting, two points of view clashed: that of Lenin, for an immediate armed uprising; and that of Zinoviev and Kamenev, for the postponement of the question of armed uprising until the Congress of Soviets.

An overwhelming majority, including Stalin, Kalinin, Sverdlov, Skrypnik, Dzerzhinsky, Ravichy, Sokolnikov, Milyutin, Joffe, Schmidt, and Latsis, supported Lenin's point of view and created a Military Political Centre consisting of Sverdlov, Stalin, Bubnov, Uritsky and Dzerzhinsky.

This resulted in the resignation of Kamenev and Zinoviev from the Central Committee. Kamenev wrote that "not being able to support the point of view expressed in the latest decisions of the C. C. which define the character of its work, and considering that the position is leading the Party of the Proletariat to defeat, I ask the C. C. to recognise that I am no longer a member of the C.C."]

## I

Lenin reads the resolution that was adopted by the Central Committee at the previous session. He says that the resolution was adopted with two voting against. If the comrades who disagree wish to express themselves, he says, discussion may be opened; in the meantime, however, he gives the reasons for this resolution.

Had the Menshevik and the Socialist-Revolutionary Parties broken with conciliationism, it would have been possible to offer them a compromise. This offer was made; it is obvious, however, that this compromise has been rejected by the above-named parties. On the other hand, it has become clear at this period that the masses are following us. It was so even before the Kornilov affair; [Lenin] proves it by statistics of the elections in Petrograd and in Moscow. The Kornilov affair has pushed the masses still closer to us. Inter-lation of forces at the Democratic Conference. Situation is clearly either a dictatorship of Kornilov, or a dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorest strata of the peasantry. Sentiment cannot serve as guide, since it is changeable and cannot be measured; we must be guided by an objective analysis and an appraisal of the revolution. The masses have expressed confidence in the Bolsheviks and the demand of them not words, but deeds, a decisive policy both in the struggle against the war and in the struggle against economic ruin. If we make our basis a political analysis of the revolution, it will become perfectly clear that this is now being proven even by anarchistic actions.

He analyses further the situation in Europe and proves that a revolution there is still more difficult than here. If, in a country like Germany, there has been a mutiny in the navy, this proves that things there have gone very far. The international situation gives us a good deal of objective data showing that if we act now, we will have on our side all of proletarian Europe. He proves that the bourgeoisie wishes to surrender Petrograd. We can save ourselves from this only by taking Petrograd into our hands. The conclusion from all this is clear, namely, that the armed uprising of which the Central Committee resolution speaks is on the order of the day.

As to practical conclusions from the resolution, it is more convenient to make them after listening to the reports of the representatives of the centres.

From a political analysis of the class struggle, both in Russia and in Europe, follows the necessity of a most decisive, most active policy, which can be only an armed uprising.

## II

[Lenin] disagrees with Milyutin and Shotman and points out that it is not a question of armed forces, not a question of fighting against the troops, but of one part of the troops fighting against another. He sees no pessimism in what has been said here. He argues that the forces on the side of the bourgeoisie are not large. Facts prove that we have a preponderance over the enemy. Why cannot the Central Committee begin? This does not follow from all the data. To reject the Central Committee's resolution,

one must show that there is no economic ruin, that the international situation is not leading to complications. If the trade union functionaries demand all power, they understand very well what they want. Objective conditions show that the peasantry must be led; it will follow the proletariat.

Some are afraid that we would not retain power; but just now we have particular chances of retaining power.

[Lenin] expresses a wish that the discussion should be conducted on the level of analysing the resolution on its merits.

### III

If all resolutions fell through in this way, one wouldn't wish for anything better. Now Zinoviev says down with the slogan, "Power to the Soviets," and pressure on the government. If it is said that the uprising is "of the people" there is no need of speaking of conspiracies. If politically the uprising is inevitable, we must treat the uprising as an art. Politically, it has already matured.

Precisely because there is bread for one day only, we cannot wait for the Constituent Assembly. [Lenin] proposes to endorse the resolution, to energetically push the preparations and to leave it to the Central Committee and the Soviet to decide when.

### IV

Arguing against Zinoviev, Lenin says that it is wrong to contrast the present revolution with the February Revolution. As to the matter under consideration, he proposes the following resolution:

The meeting heartily greets and fully supports the resolution of the Central Committee. It calls upon all the organisations and all the workers and soldiers to prepare the armed uprising most energetically, in every way to support the organ which the Central Committee is creating for this purpose, and expresses full confidence that the Central Committee and the Soviet will in due time indicate the favourable moment and the most expedient methods for an offensive.

## PART VI

### (i)

## LETTER TO COMRADES

[This letter deals with the objections of Kamenev and Zinoviev against the armed uprising.

It contains a severe and annihilating criticism of the position taken up by "the little pair of comrades" at the meetings of the C. C. on Oct. 23 and Oct. 29, at which the question of immediate organisation of armed insurrection was decided, and shatters to pieces their arguments step by step.

This letter played an important role in mobilising the forces of the Party for and around the decision of the Central Committee and left no room for vacillation in those days of the October Revolution.]

Comrades, the time we are passing through is so critical, events rush with such incredible swiftness that a publicist, placed by the will of fate somewhat aside from the main stream of history, constantly risks either being late or proving uninformed, especially if his writings appear in print after a lapse of time. Though realising this fully, I am still forced to address this letter to the Bolsheviks, even under the risk that it may not be published at all, for the vacillations against which I deem it my duty to warn in the most decisive manner are of an unprecedented nature and are capable of exercising a ravaging effect on the party, the movement of the international proletariat, and the revolution. As for the danger

of being too late, I will prevent it by indicating what information and of what date I possess.

It was only on Monday morning, October 29, that I saw a comrade who had on the previous day participated in a very important Bolshevik gathering in Petrograd, and who informed me in detail about the discussion. The subject of discussion was the same question of the uprising, which is also discussed by the Sunday papers of all political trends. At the gathering there was represented all that is most influential in all branches of Bolshevik work in the capital. Only a most insignificant minority of the gathering, namely, all in all two comrades, had taken a negative stand. The arguments which those comrades advanced are so weak, these arguments are the manifestation of such an astounding confusion, timidity, and collapse of all the fundamental ideas of Bolshevism and revolutionary-proletarian internationalism that it is not easy to discover an explanation for such shameful vacillations. The fact nevertheless is there, and since the revolutionary party has no right to tolerate vacillations in such a serious question, as this little pair of comrades, who have scattered their principles to the winds, might cause a certain confusion of mind, it is necessary to analyse their arguments, to expose their vacillations, to show how shameful they are. The following lines will be an attempt at carrying out this task.

We have no majority among the people and without this condition the uprising is hopeless.

Men capable of saying this are either distorters of the truth or pedants who, at all events, without taking the

least account of the real circumstances of the revolution, wish to secure an advance guarantee that the Bolshevik Party has received throughout the whole country no more nor less than one-half of the votes plus one. Such a guarantee history has never proffered, and is absolutely in no position to proffer in any revolution. To advance such a demand means to mock one's audience, and is nothing but a cover to hide one's own *flight* from reality.

For reality shows us palpably that it was after the July days that the majority of the people began quickly to go over to the side of the Bolsheviks. This was demonstrated first by the September 2 elections in Petrograd, even before the Kornilov affair, when the Bolshevik vote rose from 20 to 33 per cent in the city not including the suburbs, and also by the elections to the borough councils in Moscow in September, when the Bolshevik vote rose from 11 to 49 1/3 per cent (one Moscow comrade, whom I saw recently, told me that the correct figure is 51 per cent). This was proven by the new elections to the Soviets. It was proven by the fact that a majority of the peasant Soviets, the "Avksentyev" central Soviet notwithstanding, has expressed itself *against* the coalition. To be *against* the coalition means *in practice* to follow the Bolsheviks. Furthermore, reports from the front prove more and more often and definitely that the soldiers are passing *en masse* over to the side of the Bolsheviks more and more decisively, in spite of the malicious slanders and attacks by the Socialist-Revolutionary-Menshevik leaders, officers, deputies, etc., etc.



Last, but not least, the most outstanding fact in the present situation is *the revolt of the peasantry*. Here is an objective passing over of the people to the side of the Bolsheviks, shown not by words but by deeds. For, notwithstanding the lies of the bourgeois press and its miserable henchmen of the "vacillating" *Novaya Zhizn* and Co., and their wails about pogroms and anarchy, the fact is there. The movement of the peasants in Tambov province was an uprising both in the material and political sense, an uprising that has yielded such splendid political results as, in the first place, permission to give the land to the peasants. It is not for nothing that the S.-R. rabble, including the *Dyelo Naroda*, frightened by the uprising, now *screams* about the necessity of giving over the lands to the peasants. Here is the demonstration of the correctness of Bolshevism and its success, *in deeds*. It has turned out to be impossible to "teach" the Bonapartists and their lackeys in the pre-parliament otherwise than by means of an uprising.

This is a fact. Facts are stubborn things. And such a factual "argument" in *favour* of an uprising is stronger than thousands of "pessimistic" evasions on the part of confused and frightened politicians.

If the peasant uprising were not an event of nationwide political import, the S.-R. lackeys from the pre-parliament would not be shouting about the necessity of giving over the land to the peasants.

Another splendid political and revolutionary consequence of the peasant uprising, as already noted in the *Rabochy Put*, is the delivery of grain to the railroad stations

in the Tambov province.<sup>146</sup> Here is another "argument" for you, confused gentlemen, an argument in favour of the uprising as the only means to save the country from the famine that knocks at our door and from a crisis of unheard-of dimensions. While the S.-R.-Menshevik betrayers of the people are grumbling, writing resolutions, promising to feed the hungry by convoking the Constituent Assembly, the people are beginning to solve the bread-question *Bolshevik-fashion*, by rebelling against the landowners capitalists, and speculators.

The wonderful results of *such* a solution (the only real solution) of the bread question, even the bourgeois press even the *Russkaya Volya*, was compelled to admit by way of publishing information to the effect that the railroad stations in Tambov province were swamped with grain . . . *after the peasants had revolted!!*

No, to doubt now that the majority of the people is following and will follow the Bolsheviks means shamefully to vacillate and in practice to throw overboard *all* the principles of proletarian revolutionism, to renounce Bolshevism completely.

We are not strong enough to seize power, and the bourgeoisie is not strong enough to hinder the calling of the Constituent Assembly.

The first part of this argument is a simple paraphrase of the preceding argument. It does not gain in strength and convincing power, when the confusion of its authors and their fear of the bourgeoisie is expressed in terms of pessimism concerning the workers and optimism concerning the bourgeoisie. If the military cadets and the Cossacks say that they will fight against the Bolsheviks to the last

drop of their blood, this deserves full credence, if however, the workers and soldiers at hundreds of meetings express full confidence in the Bolsheviks and affirm their readiness to stand fast for the passing of power to the Soviets, then it is "timely" to recall that voting is one thing and fighting another!

Of course, with this kind of argument, the uprising is "refuted." But the question is, wherein does this peculiarly conceived and peculiarly orientated "pessimism" differ from a political shift to the side of the bourgeoisie?

Look at the facts. Remember the Bolshevik declarations, repeated thousands of times and now "forgotten" by our pessimists. We have said thousands of times that the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies are the power, that they are the vanguard of the revolution, that they *can* take power. Thousands of times have we upbraided the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s for phrase-mongering concerning the "plenipotentiary organs of democracy" and at the same time for *being afraid* to transfer power to the Soviets.

And what has the Kornilov affair proven? It has proven that the Soviets are a real power.

And, now, after this has been proven by experience, by facts, we shall repudiate Bolshevism, deny ourselves, and say: we are not strong enough (although we have the Soviets of both capitals and a majority of the provincial Soviets on the side of the Bolsheviks)!!! Are these not shameful vacillations? As a matter of fact, our "pessimists"

throw overboard the slogan of "All Power to the Soviets," though they are afraid to admit it.

How can it be proven that the bourgeoisie is not sufficiently strong to hinder the calling of the Constituent Assembly?

If the Soviets *have not the power* to overthrow the bourgeoisie, this *means* that the latter is strong enough to hinder the calling of the Constituent Assembly, for there is nobody to prevent it from doing this. To trust the promises of Kerensky and Co., to trust the resolutions of the pre-parliament lackeys—is this worthy of a member of a proletarian party and a revolutionist?

Not only has the bourgeoisie power to hinder the calling of the Constituent Assembly, if the present government is not overthrown, but it can also *indirectly* achieve this result by surrendering Petrograd to the Germans, by laying the front open, by increasing lockouts, by sabotaging deliveries of foodstuffs. It has been proven by facts that, to a certain extent, the bourgeoisie has already been doing all this. That means that it is capable of doing all this *to the full extent*, if the workers and soldiers do not overthrow it.

The Soviets must be a revolver pointed at the temple of the government with the demand of convoking the Constituent Assembly and renouncing Kornilovist plots.

This is how far one of the two sad pessimists has gone. He had to go that far, for to renounce the uprising means to renounce the slogan of "All Power to the Soviets."

Of course, a slogan is "not a sanctuary"; we all agree to that. But then why has *no one* raised the question of changing this slogan (in the same way as I raised that question after the July days)? Why be *afraid* to say it openly, in spite of the fact that the question of the uprising, which is now *indispensable* for the realisation of the slogan, "All Power to the Soviets," has been discussed in the party since September?

Our sad pessimists will never be able to extricate themselves in this respect. A renunciation of the uprising is a renunciation of the passing of power to the Soviets and a "transfer" of all hopes and expectations to the kind bourgeoisie, which has "promised" to convoke the Constituent Assembly.

Is it so difficult to understand that once *power* is in the hands of the Soviets, the Constituent Assembly and its success are *guaranteed*? The Bolsheviki have said so thousands of times. *No one* has ever attempted to refute this. Everybody has recognised such a "combined type," but to smuggle in a renunciation of giving the power to the Soviets under the guise of the words "combined type," to smuggle it in *secretly* while *fearing* to renounce our slogan openly—what is this? Can one find a parliamentary expression to characterise it?

Some one has very pointedly retorted to our pessimist: "A revolver without bullets?" If so, it means directly going over to the Liberdans, who have declared the Soviets a "revolver" thousands of times and have deceived the people thousands of times. For *while they have been in control* the Soviets have proven to be a nullity.

If, however, it is a revolver "with bullets," then this is a *technical* preparation for an uprising. For the bullet has to be procured, the revolver has to be loaded—and one bullet alone wouldn't be enough.

Either joining the side of the Liberdans and openly renouncing the slogan, "All Power to the Soviets," or an uprising.

There is no middle course.

The bourgeoisie cannot surrender Petrograd to the Germans, although Rodzyanko wants to, for the fighting is done not by the bourgeoisie, but by our heroic sailors.

This argument again reduces itself to the same "optimism" *concerning the bourgeoisie* which is fatally manifested at every step by those who are pessimistic regarding the revolutionary forces and capabilities of the proletariat.

The fighting is done by the heroic sailors, *but* this did not prevent *two* admirals from disappearing before the capture of Esel!

This is a fact. Facts are stubborn things. The facts prove that the admirals are capable of treachery no less than Kornilov. That General Headquarters has not been reformed, and that the commanding staff is Kornilovist, are undisputed facts.

If the Kornilovists (with Kerensky at their head, for he is also a Kornilovist) want to surrender Petrograd, they can do it in two or even in three ways.

First, they can, by an act of treachery of the Kornilovist commanding staff, open the northern land front.

Second, they can "agree" concerning freedom of action for the entire German fleet, which is *stronger* than we are; they can agree both with the German and with the English imperialists. Moreover, the admirals who have disappeared may also have delivered the *plans* to the Germans.

Third, they can, by means of lockouts, and by sabotaging the delivery of foodstuffs, bring our troops to *complete* desperation and impotence.

Not a single one of these three ways can be gainsaid. The facts have proven that the bourgeois Cossack party of Russia has already knocked at all three of these doors, that it has tried to open all of them.

What follows? It follows that we have no right to *wait* until the bourgeoisie strangles the revolution.

That Rodzyanko's wishes are no trifle has been proven by experience. Rodzyanko is a man of affairs. Behind Rodzyanko stands *capital*. This is beyond dispute. Capital is a huge force as long as the proletariat does not have power. Rodzyanko has carried out the policies of capital, faithfully and truly, *for decades*.

What follows? It follows that to vacillate in the question of an uprising as the only means to save the revolution means to sink into that half-Liberdan, S.-R.-Manshevik cowardly confidence towards the bourgeoisie, half "peasant-like" unquestioning confidence, against which the Bolsheviks have been battling most of all.

Either fold your idle arms on your empty chest and wait, while swearing "faith" in the Constituent Assembly, until Rodzyanko and Co., have surrendered Petrograd and

strangled the revolution, or an uprising. There is no middle course.

Even the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, taken separately, does not change anything here, for no "constitutioning," no voting of any arch-sovereign assembly will have any effect on the famine, or on Wilhelm. Both the convocation and the *success* of the Constituent Assembly depend upon the passing of power to the Soviets. This old Bolshevik truth is being proved by reality ever more striking and ever more *cruelly*.

We are becoming stronger every day. We enter the Constituent Assembly as a strong opposition; why should we stake everything?

This is the argument of a philistine who has "read" that the Constituent Assembly is being called, and who confidently acquiesces in the most legal, most loyal, most constitutional course.

It is only a pity that by *waitiny* for the Constituent Assembly one can solve neither the question of famine nor the question of surrendering Petrograd. This "trifle" is forgotten by the naive or the confused or those who have allowed themselves to be frightened.

The famine will not wait, because we Bolsheviks *proclaim* faith in the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. Will the admirals who have disappeared agree to wait? Will the Maklakovs and Rodzyankos agree to stop the lockouts and the sabotaging of grain deliveries, to abrogate the secret treaties with the English and the German imperialists?

This is what the arguments of the heroes of "constitutional illusions" and parliamentary cretinism reduce them-



selves to. The living reality disappears, and what remains is only a *paper* dealing with the convocation of the Constituent Assembly; what remains is only elections.

And blind people are still wondering why hungry people and soldiers betrayed by generals and admirals are indifferent to the elections! Oh, wiseacres!

If the Kornilovists were to start things, then we would show them! But why should we ourselves risk beginning?

This is unusually convincing and unusually revolutionary. History does not repeat itself, but if we turn our back to it, and, scrutinising the first Kornilov affair, repeat: "If the Kornilovists were to start"—if we do so, what excellent revolutionary strategy! How close it is to "maybe and perhaps"! Maybe the Kornilovists will start again at an inopportune time. Isn't this a "strong" argument? What kind of an earnest foundation for a proletarian policy is this?

And what if the Kornilovists of the second draft will have learned something? What if they *wait* until hunger riots begin, until the front is broken through, until Petrograd is surrendered, *without* beginning action till then? What then?

What is proposed is that the tactics of the proletarian party be built on the possibility of the Kornilovists' repeating one of their old errors!

Let us forget all that was being and has been demonstrated by the Bolsheviks a hundred times, all that the half year's history of our revolution has proven, namely, that there is *no* way out, that there is no objective way out and can be none outside of either a dictatorship of the Kornil-

lovists or a dictatorship of the proletariat. Let us forget this, let us renounce all this and wait! Wait for what? Wait for a miracle: for the tempestuous and catastrophic course of events from May 3 until September 11 to be succeeded (due to the prolongation of the war and the spread of famine) by a peaceful, quiet, smooth, legal convocation of the Constituent Assembly and by a fulfilment of its most lawful decisions. Here you have the "Marxist" tactics! Wait, ye hungry! Kerensky has promised to convoke the Constituent Assembly.

There is really nothing in the international situation that would oblige us to act immediately; rather would we damage the cause of a Socialist revolution in the West, if we were to allow ourselves to be shot.

This argument is truly magnificent: Scheidemann "himself," Renaudel "himself" would not be able to "manipulate" more cleverly the sympathies of the workers for the international Socialist revolution!

Just think of it: under devilishly difficult conditions, having but *one* Liebknecht (and at hard labour at that), without newspapers, without freedom of assembly, without Soviets, with *all* classes of the population, including every well-to-do peasant, incredibly hostile to the idea of internationalism, with the imperialist big, middle, and petty bourgeoisie splendidly organised—the Germans, *i.e.*, the German revolutionary internationalists, the German workers dressed in sailors' jackets, started a mutiny in the navy with one chance of winning out of a hundred.

But we, with dozens of papers at our disposal, freedom of assembly, a majority in the Soviets, we proletarian

internationalists, situated best in the whole world, should refuse to support the German revolutionists by our uprising. We should reason like the Scheidemanns and Renaudels, that it is most prudent not to revolt, for if we are shot, then the world will lose such excellent, reasonable, ideal internationalists!

Let us prove how reasonable we are. Let us pass a resolution of sympathy with the *German insurrectionists*, and let us renounce the insurrection in Russia. This would be genuine, reasonable internationalism. And how fast world internationalism would blossom forth, if the same wise policy were to triumph *everywhere*! . . .

The war has tired out, has mangled the workers of all countries to the utmost. Outbursts in Italy, in Germany, and in Austria, are becoming frequent. We *alone* have Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Let us then *keep on waiting*. Let us betray the German internationalists as we are betraying the Russian peasants, who, not by words but by deeds, by their uprising against the land-owners, appeal to us to rise against Kerensky's government. . . .

Let the clouds of the imperialist conspiracy of the capitalists of all countries who are ready to strangle the Russian Revolution darken—we shall wait patiently until we are strangled *by the rouble*! Instead of attacking the conspirators and breaking their ranks by a victory of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, let us wait, for the Constituent Assembly, where all international plots will be vanquished by *voting*, provided that Kerensky and Rodzyanko conscientiously convoke the Constituent

Assembly. Have we any right to doubt the honesty of Kerensky and Rodzyanko?

But "every one" is against us! We are isolated; the Central Executive Committee, the Menshevik-internationalists, the *Novaya Zhizn* people, and the Left S.-R.'s have been issuing and will issue appeals against us!

A crushing argument. Up to now we have been mercilessly castigating the vacillators for their vacillations. *By so doing*, we have won the sympathies of the people. *By so doing*, we have conquered the Soviets, without which the uprising could not be safe, quick, sure. Now let us use the Soviets which we won over in order *to pass, ourselves, into the camp of the vacillators*. What a splendid career for Bolshevism!

The whole essence of the policy of the Liberians and Chernovs, and also of the "Left" among the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks, consists in *vacillations*. As an *indication* of the fact that the *masses are moving to the Left*, note that the Left S.-R.'s and Menshevik-internationalists have *tremendous* political importance. Two such facts as the passing of some 40 per cent. of both Mensheviks and S.-R.'s into the camp of the Left, on the one hand, and the peasant uprising, on the other, are clearly and obviously connected with each other.

But it is the very character of this connection that reveals the abysmal spinelessness of those who have now undertaken to whimper over the fact that the Central Executive Committee, which has rotted away, or the vacillating Left S.-R.'s and Co., have come out against us. For these vacillations of the petty-bourgeois leaders—the

Martovs, Kamkovs, Sukhanovs, and Co.—have to be juxtaposed to the *uprising* of the peasants. Here is a *realistic* political juxtaposition. With whom shall we go? With the vacillating handfuls of Petrograd leaders, who have *indirectly* expressed the radicalisation of the masses, and who, at *every* political turn, have shamefully whimpered, vacillated, run to ask forgiveness of the Liberdans, Avksentyevs and Co., or *with those masses that have moved to the Left?*

Thus, and only thus, can the question be stated.

Because the peasant uprising has been betrayed by the Martovs, Kamkovs, and Sukhanovs, we, the workers' party of revolutionary internationalists, are asked also to betray it. This is what the policy of "nodding" to the Left S.-R.'s and Menshevik-internationalists reduces itself to.

But we have said: to help the vacillating, we must stop vacillating ourselves. Those "lovely" Left petty-bourgeois democrats in their vacillations have even sympathised with a coalition! In the long run we succeeded in making them follow us because we ourselves did not vacillate. Life has vindicated us.

These gentlemen by their vacillations have always been ruining the revolution. We alone have saved it. Shall we now shrink back, when the famine is knocking at the gates of Petrograd and Rodzyanko and Co. are preparing to surrender it?

But we have not even firm connections with the railwaymen and the postal employees. Their official representatives are the Plansons. And can we win without the post office and without railroads?

Yes, yes, Plansons here, Liberdans there. What confidence have the *masses* shown them? Is it not we who have kept on proving that those leaders betrayed the *masses*? Was it not from those leaders that the masses turned *towards us*, both at the elections in Moscow and at the elections to the Soviets? Or doesn't the mass of railroad and postal employees starve? Nor strike against Kerensky and Co.?

"Did we have connections with these unions before March 13?"-- one comrade asked a pessimist. The latter replied by pointing out that the two revolutions were not comparable. But this reply only *strengthens* the position of the one who asked the question. For it is the Bolsheviks who have spoken thousands of times about a prolonged preparation of the *proletarian* revolution *against* the *bourgeoisie* (and they have not spoken about it, in order to forget it on the eve of the decisive moment). It is the very *separation* of the proletarian elements of the masses from the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois upper layer that characterises the political and economic life of the unions of postal employees and railwaymen. What matters is not necessarily to secure beforehand "connections" with one or the other union; what matters is that only a victory of a proletarian and peasant uprising *can* satisfy the *masses* both of the army of railwaymen and of postal and telegraph employees.

There is enough bread in Petrograd for two or three days. Can we give bread to the insurrectionists?

One of a thousand skeptical remarks (the skeptics can *always* "doubt," and cannot be refuted by anything but

experience), one of those remarks that put the burden where it does not belong.

It is Rodzyanko and Co., it is precisely the bourgeoisie that is preparing the famine and speculating on strangling the revolution by famine. There is no escaping the famine and *there can be none* outside of an uprising of the peasants against the landowners in the village and a victory of the workers over the capitalists in the cities and in the centre. Outside of this it is *impossible* either to get grain from the rich, or to transport it despite their sabotage, or to break the resistance of the corrupt employees and the capitalist profiteers, or to establish strict accounting. This has been proven by the history of the supply organisations, of the efforts of the "democracy" that has *complained* millions of times against the sabotage of the capitalists, that has *whimpered* and *supplicated*.

There is no power on earth outside the power of a victorious proletarian revolution that would pass from complaints and begging and tears, to *revolutionary action*. And the longer the proletarian revolution is delayed, the longer it is protracted by events or by the vacillations of the wavering and confused, the more victims it will cost and the more difficult it will be to *organise* the transportation and distribution of foodstuffs.

"Delaying the uprising means death"—this is what we have to answer to those having the sad "courage" to look at the growing economic ruin, at the approaching famine, and still *dissuade* the workers from the uprising (*that is, persuade them to wait, and still place confidence in the bourgeoisie*).

There is no danger in the situation at the front either. Even if the soldiers conclude a truce by themselves, there is still no calamity in that.

But the soldiers will not conclude a truce. This requires state power, which cannot be obtained without an uprising. The soldiers will simply *run away*. Reports from the front tell that. It is impossible to wait without the risk of aiding a collusion between Rodzyanko and Wilhelm and without the risk of *complete* economic ruin, with the soldiers running away in masses, once they (*being already close to desperation*) sink into absolute despair and leave everything to the mercy of fate.

But if we take power, and obtain neither a truce nor a democratic peace, then the soldiers may not wish to fight a revolutionary war. What then?

An argument which brings to mind the saying: one fool can ask ten times more questions than ten wise men are capable of answering.

We have never denied the difficulties of *power* during an imperialist war. Nevertheless, we have always *preached* the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorest peasantry. Shall we renounce this, when the moment has actually arrived?

We have always said that the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country creates gigantic changes in the international situation, in the economic life of the country, in the condition of the army, in its mood—shall we now “forget” all this, and allow ourselves to be frightened by the “difficulties” of the revolution?

As everybody reports, the masses are not in a mood that would drive them into the streets. Among the signs justifying pessimism



may be mentioned the unusual spread of the pogromist and Black Hundred press.

When people allow themselves to be frightened by the bourgeoisie, then all objects and phenomena naturally appear yellow to them. First, they substitute an impressionist, intellectual criterion of the movement for the Marxist one ; for a political analysis of the development of the class struggle and of the course of events throughout the country as a whole against the international background as a whole, they substitute subjective impressions of moods. That a firm party line, its unyielding resolve, is *also* a mood-creating factor, particularly in the sharpest revolutionary moments, they "conveniently" forget, of course. It is sometimes very "convenient" for people to forget that the responsible leaders, by their vacillations and by their readiness to burn their idols of yesterday, cause the most unbecoming vacillations in the mood of certain strata of the masses.

Secondly—and this is at present the main thing—in speaking about the mood of the masses, the spineless people forget to add :

that "everybody" reports it as a tense and expectant mood ;

that "everybody" agrees that, called upon by the Soviets for the defence of the Soviets, the workers will step forward as one man ;

that "everybody" agrees that the workers are greatly dissatisfied with the indecision of the centre concerning the "final decisive struggle," whose inevitability is clearly recognised ;

that "everybody" unanimously characterises the mood of the broadest masses as close to despair and points at the anarchy developing on this very basis ; and

that "everybody" also recognises that there is among the class-conscious workers a definite unwillingness to go out into the streets *only* for demonstrations, *only* for partial struggles, since the approach of not a partial but a general struggle is in the air, while the hopelessness of individual strike demonstrations and acts of pressure has been tested and fully understood.

*And so forth.*

If we approach this characterisation of the mass mood from the point of view of the entire development of the class and political struggle and of the entire course of events during the half year of our revolution, it will become clear to us how those people frightened by the bourgeoisie are distorting the question. The question is not the same as it was before May 3-4, June 22, July 16, for then there was a *spontaneous excitement* which we, as a party, either failed to comprehend (May 3) or held back and shaped into a peaceful demonstration (June 22 and July 16), for we knew very well at that time that the Soviets were *not yet* ours, that the peasants *still* trusted the Liberdan-Chernov and not the Bolshevik course (uprising), that consequently we could not have at the back of us the majority of the people, and that consequently the uprising was premature.

At that time the question of the last decisive struggle did *not* arise at all among the majority of the class-conscious workers ; not one out of all the party units would have raised that question at that time. As to the unenlightened

and very broad masses, there was neither a concentrated mood nor the resolve born out of despair among them; there was only a spontaneous *excitement* with the naive hope of "influencing" Kerensky and the bourgeoisie by "action," by a demonstration pure and simple.

What is needed for an uprising is not this, but a conscious, firm, and unswerving resolve on the part of the class-conscious elements to fight to the end; this on the one hand. On the other, a concentrated mood of despair among the broad masses who *feel* that nothing can be saved now by half-measures; that you cannot "influence" anybody by merely influencing him; that the hungry will "smash everything, destroy everything, even in an anarchist way," *if* the Bolsheviks are not able to lead them in a decisive battle.

It is precisely to this combination of a tense mood as a result of the lessons of experience among the class-conscious elements and a mood of hatred towards the lockout employers and capitalists, a mood close to despair among the broadest masses, that the development of the revolution has in practice brought both the workers *and* the peasantry.

It is precisely on this basis that we can also understand the "success" of the scoundrels of the Black Hundred press who imitate Bolshevism. That the Black Hundreds are full of malicious glee at the approach of a decisive battle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, has been observed in all revolutions without exception; this has always been so, and it is absolutely unavoidable. And if you allow yourselves to be frightened by *this* circumstance,

then you have to renounce not only the uprising but the proletarian revolution in general. For this revolution in a capitalist society *cannot* mature without being accompanied by malicious glee on the part of the Black Hundreds and by hopes that they would be able to feather their nest in this way.

The class-conscious workers know perfectly well that the Black Hundreds work hand in hand with the bourgeoisie, and that a decisive victory of the workers (in which the petty-bourgeoisie does not believe, which the capitalists are afraid of, which the Black Hundreds wish out of sheer malice, convinced as they are that the Bolsheviks cannot retain power)—that this victory will utterly *crush* the Black Hundreds, that the Bolsheviks *will* be able to retain power, firmly and to the greatest advantage of all humanity, tired out and made wretched by the war.

Indeed, is there anybody in his senses who can doubt that the Rodzyankos and Suvorins are acting in accord, that the roles are distributed among them?

Has it not been proven by facts that Kerensky acts on Rodzyanko's order, while the "State Printing Press of the Russian Republic" (don't laugh!) prints at the expense of the state the Black Hundred speeches of the Black Hundred "State Duma"? Has not this fact been exposed even by the lackeys from the *Dyelo Naroda*, who do lackey service to "one of their little ilk"? Has not the experience of all elections proven that the Cadet nominations were fully supported by the *Navoye Vremya*, which is a venal paper controlled by the "interests" of the tsarist landowners?

Did we not read yesterday that commercial and industrial capital (non-partisan capital, of course : oh, non-partisan capital, to be sure, for the Vikhlyayevs and Rakitnikovs, the Gvozdevs and Nikitins are in coalition not with the Cadets—God forbid—but with the *non-partisan* commercial and industrial circles !) has donated the goodly sum of 300,000 roubles to the Cadets ?

The whole Black Hundred press, as we look at things from a class, not from a sentimental point of view, is a branch of the firm "Ryabushinsky, Milyukov, and Co." Capital buys, on the one hand, the Milyukovs, Zaslavskys, Potresovs, and so on ; on the other, the Black Hundreds.

There is no other means of putting an end to this most hideous poisoning of the people by the Black Hundred plague than the *victory of the proletariat*.

Is it any wonder that the crowd, tired out and made wretched by hunger and the prolongation of the war, eagerly reaches out for the Black Hundred poison ? Can one imagine a capitalist society on the eve of a collapse without despair among the oppressed masses ? And can the despair of the masses, a large part of whom are still in darkness, not express itself in increased consumption of all sorts of poison ?

No ; the position of those who, in arguing about the mood of the masses, place at the door of the masses their own personal spinelessness, is hopeless. The masses are divided into those who consciously wait and those who unconsciously are ready to sink into despair ; but the masses of the oppressed and the hungry are *not* spineless.

On the other hand, the Marxist party cannot reduce the question of an uprising to the question of a military conspiracy.

Marxism is an unusually profound and many-sided doctrine. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that *scraps* of quotations from Marx—especially when the quotations are made inappropriately—can always be found among the “arguments” of those who break with Marxism. A military conspiracy is Blanquism, *if* it is organised not by a party of a definite class, *if* its organisers have not analysed the political moment in general and the international situation in particular, *if* the party has not on its side the sympathy of the majority of the people, as proven by objective facts, *if* the development of events in the revolution has not brought about a practical refutation of the conciliatory illusions of the petty-bourgeoisie, *if* the majority of the recognised “plenipotentiary” or otherwise expressed organs of revolutionary struggle like the Soviets have not been conquered, *if* there has not ripened a sentiment in the army (if this is going on during a war) against the government that protracts the unjust war against the whole of the people, *if* the slogans of the uprising (like “All power to the Soviets,” “Land to the peasants,” or “Immediate offer of a democratic peace to all the belligerent peoples, coupled with an immediate abrogation of all secret treaties and secret diplomacy,” etc.) have not become widely known and popular, *if* the advanced workers are not convinced of the desperate situation of the masses and of the support of the village, a support proven by a serious peasant uprising or by an uprising against the landowners and the government that defends the landowners, *if* the economic situation of the country inspires

one with earnest hopes for a favourable solution of the crisis by peaceable and parliamentary means.

Is this sufficient?

In my pamphlet entitled: *Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* (I hope it will appear one of these days), I have referred to a quotation from Marx which really bears upon the question of an uprising and which enumerates the features of an uprising as an "art."

I am ready to wager that if we were to propose to all those chatterers, who now shout in Russia against a military conspiracy, to open their mouths, if we were to appeal to them to explain the difference between the "art" of an armed uprising and a military conspiracy that deserves condemnation, they could either repeat what was quoted above or they would cover themselves with shame and would call forth the general ridicule of the workers. Why not try, my dear also-Marxists! Sing us a song *against* "military conspiracy"!

### Postscript

The above lines had been written when I received at eight o'clock Tuesday evening the morning Petrograd papers, with an article of Mr. V. Bazarov in the *Novaya Zhizn*. Mr. V. Bazarov asserts that "a hand-written bulletin was distributed in the city, in which arguments were presented in the name of two eminent Bolsheviks, against immediate action."

If this is true, I beg the comrades, whom this letter cannot reach earlier than Wednesday noon, to *publish it* as quickly as possible,

I did not write it for the press; I wanted to converse with the members of our party by way of correspondence. But if the heroes of the *Kovaya Zhizn*, who do not belong to the party and who have been ridiculed by it a hundred times for their contemptible spinelessness (those are the elements who voted for the Bolsheviks the day before yesterday, for the Mensheviks yesterday, and who *almost* united them at the world-famous unity congress), if such individuals receive a *bulletin* from members of our party in which they carry on propaganda against an uprising, then we cannot keep silent. We must agitate also *in favour of* an uprising. Let the anonymous individuals finally appear in the light of day, and let them bear the punishment they deserve for their shameful vacillations—even if it be only the ridicule of all class-conscious workers. I have at my disposal only one hour before I send the present letter to Petrograd, and I therefore wish to point out only by a word or two a “method” of the sad heroes of the brainless *Novaya Zhizn* tendency. Mr. V. Bazarov attempts to polemise against Comrade Ryazanov, who has said, and who is a thousand times correct in saying, that “an uprising is being prepared by all those who create in the masses a mood of despair and indifference.”

The sad hero of a sad cause “rejoins” as follows:

“Have despair and indifference ever conquered?”

Oh, contemptible little fools from the *Novaya Zhizn*! Do they know *such* examples of uprising in history as this, when the masses of the oppressed classes were victorious in a desperate battle *without* having been brought to despair by long sufferings and by an extreme sharpening



of all sorts of crisis, when those masses had not been seized by indifference towards various lackey-like pre-parliaments, towards the idle playing with revolution, towards the reduction of the Soviets by the Liberdans from organs of power and uprising to the role of empty talking shops?

Or have the contemptible little fools from the *Novaye Zhizn* perhaps discovered among the masses an *indifference* to the question of bread, to the prolongation of the war, to land for the peasants?

N. LENIN.

Written October 29-30, 1917.

## LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY.

[The decision of the C. C. at its meeting on 29th Oct. to organise Armed Uprising led to the resignations of Kamanev and Zinoviev.

Immediately after this, Kamanev wrote a note in the *Novaya Zhizn*, an anti-Bolshevik paper, under the heading :

U. Kamenev ! About the Uprising.

Kamanev Stated, in his name and that of Zinoviev, that they were obliged under those conditions to declare themselves against any attempt to take the initiative of an armed uprising which would be doomed to defeat and which would have the most dangerous effect on the Party, the Proletariat, the fate of the revolution. "To stake

everything on the card of an uprising within the next few days would be tantamount to making a step of desperation."

This is the reply to the note of Kamenev and Zinoviev and was sent to all Party members. The same day he wrote another letter to the C. C. of R. S. D. L. P. analysing the arguments of "the little pair of Comrades."

The C. C. discussed these things on Nov. 2 and imposed upon Kamenev and Zinoviev "the obligation not to make any statement against the decisions of the C. C. and the line of work laid out by it."]

Comrades :

I have not had a chance yet to receive the Petrograd papers for Wednesday, October 31. When the full text of Kamenev's and Zinoviev's declaration, published in the non-party paper, the *Novaya Zhizn*, was transmitted to me by telephone, I refused to believe it ; but it is impossible to doubt, and I am compelled to take the opportunity to transmit this letter to the members of the party by Thursday evening or Friday morning, for it would be a crime to keep quiet in the face of such unheard-of *strike-breaking*.

The more serious the practical problem, and the more responsible and "outstanding" the persons committing the strike-breaking, the more dangerous it is, the more decisively must the strike-breakers be thrown out, the more unforgivable it would be to hesitate even in view of past "services" of the strike-breakers.

Just think of it ! It is known in party circles that the party has been discussing the question of the uprising since September. Nobody has ever heard of a single letter or

leaflet by either of these persons! Now, on the eve, we may say, of the Congress of Soviets, two outstanding Bolsheviks take a stand *against* the majority, and, obviously, *against* the Central Committee. They do not say this directly; and therefore the damage to the cause is still greater, for it is more dangerous to speak by hinting.

From the text of Kamenev's and Zinoviev's declaration it is perfectly clear that they have taken a stand against the Central Committee, for otherwise their declaration would be absurd; however, they did not say *which* decision of the Central Committee they disputed.

Why?

Quite obviously: because it has not been published by the Central Committee.

What is it, then, that we have here?

Dealing with a burning problem of the highest importance, on the eve of the critical day of November 2, two "outstanding Bolsheviks" attack an *unpublished* decision of the party centre in the *non-party* press, in a paper which as far as this given problem is concerned, goes *hand in hand with the bourgeoisie against the workers' party!*

Obviously, this is a thousand times meaner and a *million times more harmful* than were all the writings of Plekhanov in the *non-party* press in 1906-1907, which were so sharply condemned by the party! But at that time it was a question only of elections, while now it is a question of an uprising for the purpose of conquering power!

And with such a question before us, *after* the centre has made a decision, to dispute this *unpublished* decision

before the Rodzyankos and Kerenskys in a non-party paper—can one imagine an action more treacherous, more strike-breaking?

I would consider it a shame if, in consequence of my former closeness to those former comrades, I were to hesitate to condemn them. I say outright that I do not consider them comrades any longer, and that I will fight with all my power both in the Central Committee and at the congress to expel them both from the party.

For a workers' party, which life confronts ever more often with an uprising, cannot solve this difficult problem if unpublished decisions of the centre, after they have been accepted, are disputed in the non-party press, and vacillations and confusion are brought into the ranks of the fighters.

Let the gentlemen, Zinoviev and Kamenev, found their own party out of dozens of people who have grown confused, or out of candidates for the Constituent Assembly. The workers will not join such a party, for its first slogan will be:

"Members of the Central Committee, defeated at the meeting of the Central Committee on the question of decisive conflict, may go to the non-party press to make attacks there on the unpublished decisions of the party."

Let them build such a party for themselves; our party of Bolsheviks will only gain from it.

When all the documents are published, the strike-breaking activities of Zinoviev and Kamenev will stand out still more clearly. In the meantime let the following question engage the attention of the workers:

“Let us assume that the administration of an all-Russian trade union has decided, after a month’s deliberation and with a majority of over eighty per cent, that it is necessary to prepare for a strike, without, however, publishing in the meantime the date or anything else. Let us, further assume that, *after* the decision, two members under the fraudulent pretext of a ‘dissenting opinion,’ have not only begun to write to the local groups urging a reconsideration of the decision, but that they also allowed their letters to be communicated to the *non-party* papers. Let us, finally, assume that they themselves have in the *non-party* papers attacked this decision, although it has not been published as yet, and that they have begun to denounce the strike before the eyes of the capitalists. Would the workers hesitate in expelling from their midst such strike-breakers?”

As to how the uprising question stands now, so near to November 2, I cannot judge from afar how much damage was done to the cause by the strike-breaking action in the *non-party* press. Very great *practical* damage has undoubtedly been caused. To remedy the situation, it is first of all necessary to re-establish the unity of the Bolshevik front by excluding the strike-breakers.

The weakness of the ideological arguments against the uprising will be clearer, the more we drag them out into the open. I have recently written an article about this in the *Rabochy Put*, and if the editors do not find it possible to put it in the paper, the members of the party will probably get acquainted with it from the manuscript.

These so-called "ideological" arguments reduce themselves to the following two. First, they say, it is necessary to "wait" for the Constituent Assembly. Let us wait, they say, maybe we will hold out—this is the whole argument. Maybe, despite famine, despite economic ruin, despite the fact that the soldiers' patience is exhausted, despite Rodzyanko's step towards surrendering Petrograd to the Germans (even despite lock-outs), we will hold out.

Perhaps and maybe—this is all the force of this argument.

The second is noisy pessimism. Under the bourgeoisie and Kerensky, they say, everything was going on well; with us, everything will be bad. The capitalists have everything prepared wonderfully; the workers have everything in bad shape. The "pessimists" shout all they can about the military side of the matter, while the "optimists" keep silent, for it is hardly pleasant to anybody outside of the strike-breakers to reveal anything to Rodzyanko and Kerensky.

Hard times. A grave problem. A grave betrayal.

And still, the problem will be solved, the workers will become consolidated, the peasant uprising and the extreme impatience of the soldiers at the front will do their work! Let us close our ranks more firmly—the proletariat must win!

N. LENIN.

Written October 31, 1917.

## iii

LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC  
LABOUR PARTY

[The Statement issued by Kamanev and Zinoviev disclosed the secret decisions of the Party to undertake preparations and organise armed uprising. It was published in a paper hostile to seizure of Power by the Working class and thus Kamanev and Zinoviev had acted as "Strike-Breakers". It was a clear betrayal of the Revolution in the part of Kamanev and Zinoviev.

Lenin replied them in two letters : (1) Letter to the members of the Bolshevik Party; (2) Letter to the Central Committee of the R. S. D. L. P.

In these letters he emphatically and insistently demands the immediate expulsion of "the little pair of Comrades".]

Dear Comrades :

A self-respecting party cannot tolerate strike-breaking and strike-breakers in its midst. This is obvious. The more we think about Zinoviev's and Kamanev's appearance in the non-party press, the more obvious it becomes that their action has all the elements of strike-breaking in it. Kamanev's subterfuge used at the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet is downright mean. He is, don't you see, in full agreement with Trotsky ? But is it so difficult to understand that Trotsky *could not* talk, that he had no right to, that it was his duty not to talk in face of the enemies more than he did ? Is it so difficult to understand that it is the *duty* of a party which hides its decision from the enemy

(the necessity of an armed uprising, the fact that the situation is perfectly ripe for it, that preparations are being made in every respect, etc.), that this decision makes it *binding* upon the party to put on the adversary, at public gatherings, not only the blame, but also the initiative? Only children could fail to understand this. Kamanev's subterfuge is a plain swindle. The same must be said about Zinoviev's subterfuge, at least about his "apologetic" letter (published, if I am not mistaken, in the Central Organ), the only document I ever saw (as to a differing opinion, and alleged differing opinion, of which the *bourgeois* press is trumpeting, I, a member of the Central Committee, have not seen any *up to the present*). Among Zinoviev's "arguments" there is this: Lenin, he says, sent out his letters "before any decisions were made," and we did not protest. This is exactly what Zinoviev wrote, underscoring the word *before* four times. Is it really difficult to understand that *before* the centre has decided the question of a strike, it is permissible to make propaganda for and against it, while *after* the strike decision has been made (with the added decision to conceal this from the enemy), to make propaganda against the strike is strike-breaking? Every worker will understand this. The question of the armed uprising was being discussed in the centre since September. It is then Zinoviev and Kamenev could and *should* have made their appearance in print, so that *all*, seeing their arguments, might appreciate the fact that they are entirely at a loss. To conceal their view from the party for a whole month *before* the decision was made, and to send out a dissenting opinion *after* the decision is made--this means to be a strike-breaker.



Zinoviev pretends not to understand this difference, not to understand that after the decision about the strike was made, the decision of the centre, only strike-breakers can make propaganda against the decision before the lower bodies. Every worker will understand this.

As to Zinoviev, he was carrying on propaganda and was trying to undermine the decision of the centre both at the Sunday meeting, where neither he nor Kamenev secured a single vote, and in his present letter. Zinoviev has the affrontery to assert that "the party has not been asked" and that such problems "are not decided by ten men." Just think of it. All the members of the Central Committee know that more than ten members of the Central Committee were present at the meeting at which the decisions were made, that a *majority of the plenum* was present, that Kamenev himself declared at that meeting: "This meeting has the right to decide," that it was known perfectly well about the absent members of the Central Committee that their *majority* was *not* in agreement with Zinoviev and Kamenev. And now, *after* the Central Committee has made this decision at a meeting which Kamenev himself recognised as having the *right to decide*, a member of the Central Committee has the insolence to write: "The party has not been asked"; "Such problems are not decided by ten men." This is strike-breaking at its worst. Between party congresses, the Central Committee decides. The Central Committee has decided. Kamenev and Zinoviev, who, *before* the decision was made, did not oppose it in writing, began to *dispute* the decision of the Central Committee *after* it became a fact.

All the elements of strike-breaking are present here, After a decision was made, no disputing it is permissible, once the matter concerns immediate and *secret* preparations for a strike. Now Zinoviev has the insolence to blame us for "warning the enemy." Is there any limit to shamelessness? Who in fact has done the damage, who has broken the strike by "warning the enemy," if not the men who made their appearance in the *non-party* press?

To come out *against* a "deciding" resolution of the party in a paper which in *this* problem goes hand in hand with the bourgeoisie—if such a thing can happen now then the party is impossible, the party is destroyed.

To call a "dissenting opinion" that which Bazarov learns about and publishes in a non-party paper—this means to mock at the party.

Kamenev's and Zinoviev's appearance in the non-party press was despicable for the added reason that the party could not refute their *gossipy lie* openly. I am not acquainted with the decision as to time, says Kamenev in the letter in his own and Zinoviev's name (after such a statement, Zinoviev is fully responsible for Kamenev's conduct and action).

But how can the Central Committee refute this?

We cannot tell the truth in face of the capitalists, namely, that we have *decided* on a strike and have decided *to conceal from them the moment chosen* for the strike.

We cannot refute the gossipy lie of Zinoviev and Kamenev *without doing the cause still more harm*. Therein lies the boundless meanness, the absolute treacherousness

of these two persons, that in the face of the capitalists they have betrayed the strikers' plan. For once we keep silent in the press, everybody will guess how things stand.

Kamenev and Zinoviev have *betrayed* to Rodzyanko and Kerensky the decision of the Central Committee of their party about the armed uprising and about concealing from the enemy the preparations for the armed uprising and the choosing of a date for the armed uprising. This is a fact. No subtleties can do away with this fact. By their gossip lie two members of the Central Committee have *betrayed* to the capitalists the decision of the workers. There can and must be only one answer to this: an immediate decision of the Central Committee saying that:

Recognising in Zinoviev's and Kamenev's appearance in the non-party press all the elements of strike-breaking, the Central Committee *expels both from the party.*

It is not easy for me to write this about my former close comrades, but vacillations in this respect I would consider a crime, for a party of revolutionists which did not punish outstanding strike-breakers *would perish.*

The problem of an armed uprising, even if the strike-breakers who have betrayed the matter to Rodzyanko and Kerensky have put it off for a long while, has not been removed by the party from the order of the day. How is it possible to be preparing for an armed uprising, and actually to prepare it, while *tolerating* in our midst "outstanding" strike-breakers? The more outstanding a man *is*, the more *dangerous* he is, and the less deserving he is of "forgiveness," the French say. Only one who *belongs* to the inner circle can become a traitor.

The more "*outstanding*" the strike-breakers, the more imperative it is to punish them immediately with expulsion.

Only in this way is it possible to make the workers' party healthy, to cleanse ourselves of a dozen spineless intellectuals, to close the ranks of the revolutionists, to meet the great and momentous difficulties, to march *with the revolutionary workers*.

We cannot publish the truth to the effect that, *after* the deciding meeting of the Central Committee, Zinoviev and Kamenev had the insolence to demand a *revision* at Sunday's meeting, that Kamenev shamelessly shouted: "The Central Committee has suffered defeat, for it has done nothing for a whole week" (I could *not* refute that because I could not *tell what was really done*), while Zinoviev, with an innocent air, offered a resolution which was rejected by the meeting, proposing "to take no action before a conference with the Bolsheviks who are to come on November 2 to the Congress of Soviets."

Just think of it: after the *centre* has decided on the question of the strike, they propose to a meeting of the rank and file that it be postponed and passed on (by November 2, when the congress convenes, and that congress was latter postponed . . . the Zinovievs trust the Liberdans)—that it be passed on to a body which does not know the statutes of the party, which has *no* power over the Central Committee, and which does *not* know Petrograd.

And after this Zinoviev still has the insolence to write: "In this way the unity of the party can hardly be strengthened."

What can you call this but the threat of a split?

My answer to such a threat is that I will go the limit, I will gain for myself freedom of speech before the workers, and I will, *at whatever cost*, brand the strike-breaker Zinoviev as a strike-breaker. My answer to the threat of a split is a declaration of war to a finish, a war for the expulsion from the party of both strike-breakers.

The administration of a trade union has decided, after *months* of debate, that a strike is unavoidable and has become ripe, but that the date is to be concealed from the employers. Afterwards, two of the administration go *to the rank and file* to dispute the decision, and are defeated. Then these two go to the press and, by means of a gossipy lie, betray to the capitalists the decision of the administration, thus breaking a good half of the strike or putting it off to a less favourable time by warning the enemy.

Here we have all the elements of strike-breaking. And this is why I demand that both strike-breakers be expelled, reserving for ourselves (in view of their threatening a split) the right to publish *everything* when this becomes possible.

Written November 1, 1917.

## PART VII

### (i)

## PEASANTS AND WORKERS

No. 88 of the *Izvestiya* of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies of September 1 (August 19) contains an exceedingly interesting article, one that should become one of the basic documents in the hands of every Party propagandist and agitator working among the peasantry, and in the hands of every class conscious worker leaving for the agricultural districts, or in contact with the agricultural districts.

This article is entitled "Model Instructions Compiled from 242 Instructions Presented by Delegates from the Localities to the First All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies in Petrograd in the Year 1917."

It is extremely to be desired that the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies publish particulars of these Instructions in the greatest possible detail (if it is absolutely impossible to publish them in full, which, of course, would be best of all). What is especially needed, for instance, is a complete list of the gubernias, uyezds and volosts concerned, with information as to how many Instructions came from each locality, the dates on which the Instructions were drawn up or presented, and an analysis of at least the chief demands, so that it might be seen whether there are differences between the various regions on various points. For instance, a district where land is held individually and

one where it is held communally ; district populated by Great-Russians and districts populated by other nationalities ; districts situated in the centre of the country and districts situated in outlying sections ; districts which have never known serfdom, etc. ; do they differ in any way in their attitude towards the abolition of private ownership of all *peasant* land, the periodic redistribution of land, the prohibition of hired labour, the confiscation of the landlords' implements and cattle, and so on and so forth ? Without such detailed particulars a scientific study of the unusually valuable material contained in the "peasants' Instructions is impossible. And we Marxists must take every pains to make a scientific study of the facts upon which our policy is based.

In the absence of better material, the *Summary of Instructions* (as we shall call the "Model Instructions"), if it be not proved incorrect as to facts, is unique, and, we repeat, should be in the possession of every member of our Party.

The first part of the Summary of Instructions is devoted to general political statements, to demands for political democracy ; the second part is devoted to the land question. (Let us hope that the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, or somebody else, will make a summary of the peasants' Instructions and resolutions on the question of the war.) We shall for the present not dwell in detail on the first part and shall mention only two points : Par. 6 demands that all officials be elected ; Par. 11, the abolition, upon the conclusion of the war, of the standing army. These points bring the political

programme of the peasants *very close* to the programme of the Bolshevik Party. In stressing these points, we must point out and demonstrate in all our propaganda and agitational work that the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks are traitors not only to socialism, but also to democracy; for in Kronstadt, for instance, against the will of the people, against the principles of democracy, they insisted, in complaisance to the capitalists, that the position of commissar should be *confirmed* by the government, *i.e.*, should not be purely elective. In the Borough Dumas of Petrograd, as well as in other local government institutions, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders, contrary to democratic principles, are opposing the Bolshevik demand for the immediate organisation of a workers' militia and the subsequent organisation of a national militia.

The agrarian demands of the peasantry, according to the Summary of Instructions, consist, first of all, in the demand for the abolition, without compensation, of private ownership of land in all its forms, including peasant ownership; the transfer of highly cultivated lands to the state or to the communities; the confiscation of all livestock and farm implements on the lands confiscated (the case of peasants with very little land is excluded) and their transfer to the state or to the communities; the prohibition of hired labour; the equable distribution of land among the toilers, with periodic redistribution, etc. As measures calculated to meet the exigencies of the transition period until the Constituent Assembly is convened, the peasants demand the *immediate* issue of laws



prohibiting the sale and purchase of land ; the abolition of the laws on the withdrawal from the communes and the formation of individual farms ; the conservation of forests, fisheries etc. ; the annulment of long-term leaseholds, the revision of short-term leaseholds, and so forth.

Very little reflection on the above demands is required to understand the utter impossibility of realising them *by an alliance* with the capitalists and, indeed, unless a most resolute and merciless struggle is waged against the capitalist class, and its rule overthrown.

The self-deception of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the deceit they practise on the peasantry consist in the fact that they accept and spread the idea that such changes, changes of *such* a character, are possible without the overthrow of the domination of the capitalists, without the transfer of the whole power of the state to the proletariat, without support being given by the poor peasants to the proletarian state in its sweeping and revolutionary measures against the capitalists. It is this that makes the crystallisation of a left Wing of the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" so significant, for it proves that the realisation of this deception is growing within the party itself.

And, indeed, the confiscation of all privately-owned land implies the confiscation of the hundreds of millions of capital of the banks in which these lands are for the most part mortgaged. Is such a measure conceivable, unless the revolutionary class smashes the resistance of the capitalists by revolutionary means ? We must bear in mind that we are dealing here with the most centralised form of capital, bank capital, which is united by innumerable

threads with all the most important centres of capitalist economy in a vast country, and which can be vanquished only by the not less centralised force of the urban proletariat.

Further, the transfer to the government highly cultivated farms. Is it not obvious that a "state" which would be capable of taking over and really managing such farms for the benefit of the worker, and not for the benefit of the officials and the capitalists, must needs be a revolutionary proletarian state?

The confiscation of stud farms, etc., and of all live stock and farm implements—that is not only another tremendous blow to private property in the means of production; it is a step towards socialism. For the placing of farm implements at the "exclusive use of the state or the commune" implies the necessity for large scale socialist agriculture, or, at least, socialist control over the united small estates, socialist regulation of their activities

And the "prohibition" of hired labour? That is but an empty phrase, the helpless, unenlightened and naive yearning of down-trodden petty proprietors, who do not realise that all capitalist industry would come to a standstill if there were not a reserve army of wage labour in the villages, that it is impossible to "prohibit" hired labour in the country when it is permitted in the town, and that, as a matter of fact, the "prohibition" of hired labour would be a step towards socialism.

And this has brought us to the fundamental question of the relation of the workers to the peasants.

There has been a mass Social-Democratic labour movement in Russia for more than twenty years (if we count from the big strikes of 1896). Like a crimson thread the following question runs through this considerable interval, through two great revolutions, through the entire political history of Russia: Will the working class lead the peasants forward, towards socialism, or will the liberal bourgeoisie drag them backwards, to a reconciliation with capitalism?

The opportunist wing of the Social-Democrats reason in accordance with the following sapient formula: *Since* the Socialist-Revolutionaries are petty bourgeois, "we" reject their philistine utopian conception of socialism for a bourgeois negation of socialism. Marxism is happily replaced by Struvism, while Menshevism sinks to the role of a lackey to the Cadets, and endeavours to "reconcile" the peasant to the domination of the bourgeoisie. Tseretelli and Skobelev, hand in hand with Chernov and Avksentyev, are busy signing the reactionary decree of the Cadet landlords in the name of "revolutionary democracy"—that is the latest and most obvious expression of the part they are playing.

The revolutionary Social-Democrats, who have never abandoned their criticism of the petty-bourgeois illusions of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and *who have never combined* with them unless it be against the Cadets, have always striven to *emancipate* the peasants from the influence of the Cadets and have always advocated, as against the philistine utopian conception of socialism, not a liberal reconciliation with capitalism, but a revolutionary proletarian path to socialism.

Now that the war has tremendously accelerated development, has rendered the crisis of capitalism acute in the extreme, and has forced the peoples to make an immediate choice between ruin and the adoption of urgent and determined measures towards socialism, the abysmal difference between semi-liberal Menshevism and revolutionary proletarian Bolshevism assumes prominence as a practical question involving the action of tens of millions of peasants.

Reconcile yourselves to the reign of capital, because "we" are not yet ripe for socialism—that is what the Mensheviks say to the peasants, thus, by the way, substituting the abstract question of "socialism" in general for the concrete question of whether the wounds caused by the war can be healed unless definite measures towards socialism are taken.

Reconcile yourselves to capitalism, because the Socialist-Revolutionaries are petty bourgeois utopians—that is what the Mensheviks say to the peasants; and together with the Socialist-Revolutionaries they support the Cadet government. . . .

And the Socialist-Revolutionaries, beating their breasts, assure the peasants that they are opposed to a peace of any kind with the capitalists, that they have never regarded the Russian revolution as bourgeois—and that is *precisely why* they have formed a *bloc* with the opportunist Social-Democrats and are supporting a bourgeois government. . . . The Socialist-Revolutionaries will subscribe to any kind of programme of the peasantry, even the most revolutionary—but they never carry them out; they shelve

them, fool the peasants with empty promises, and in practice waste months in "compromising" with the Cadets within the coalition government.

This outrageous, direct and palpable betrayal of the interests of the peasants by the Socialist-Revolutionaries in practice has changed the situation enormously. We must reckon with this change. We must not continue merely to agitate against the Socialist-Revolutionaries in the old way, in the way we did in 1902-03 and in 1905-07. We must not confine ourselves to a theoretical confutation of petty-bourgeois illusions, such as "the socialisation of the land," "equal land tenure," "prohibition of hired labour," etc.

That was on the eve for the bourgeois revolution, or when the bourgeois revolution was still incomplete, and our whole task then was primarily to bring about the downfall of the monarchy.

Now the monarchy has been overthrown. The bourgeois revolution is completed, inasmuch as Russia is now a democratic republic, with a government made up of Cadets, Mensheviks, and Socialist-Revolutionaries. And in three years the war has dragged us thirty years ahead; in Europe it has established universal labour service and the compulsory trustification of enterprises; it has brought the most advanced countries to a state of famine and unprecedented ruin and forced them to take measures towards socialism.

Only the proletariat and the peasantry can overthrow the monarchy—that, in those days, was the fundamental definition of our class policy. And that definition was a

correct one. February and March 1917 corroborated it once again.

Only the proletariat, leading the poor peasantry (the semi-proletarians, as our programme calls them), can end the war by a democratic peace, can heal the wounds it has caused, and can begin to take measures towards socialism, measures which have become absolutely essential and *urgent*—such is the definition of our class policy at the present time.

From this it follows that the central point of our propaganda and agitation against the Socialist-Revolutionaries must be that they have betrayed the peasants. They represent not the mass of poor peasants, but a minority of rich peasant owners. They are leading the peasantry not towards an alliance with the workers, but towards an alliance with the capitalists, *i.e.*, towards subjection to the capitalists. They have sold the interests of the toiling and exploited masses for berths in the government, for a coalition with the Mensheviks and the Cadets.

History, accelerated by the war, has made such forward strides that old formulas have acquired a new content. "Prohibition of hired labour" was at one time merely an empty phrase of the petty-bourgeois intellectual. In actual practice it now means something else: in the 242 Instructions millions of poor peasants have announced their desire to abolish hired labour; but they do not know how to accomplish it. We do know how to accomplish it. We know that it can be accomplished only by an alliance with the workers, and under their leadership, only by

fighting the capitalists, and not by "compromising" with the capitalists.

This is the change we must make in our basic line of propaganda and agitation against the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and in the basic line of our speeches to the peasants.

The Socialist-Revolutionary Party has betrayed you, comrades peasants. It has betrayed the cabins and sided with the palaces; if not with the palaces of the monarch, at least with the palaces where the Cadets—the most bitter enemies of the revolution, and especially of the peasant revolution—participate in the government together with the Chernovs, the Peshekhonovs and the Avksentyevs.

Only the revolutionary proletariat, only the vanguard that unites it, the Bolshevik Party, can put *into practice* the programme of the poor peasants as set forth in their 242 Instructions. For the revolutionary proletariat is *actually* making for the abolition of hired labour, following the only true road—the overthrow of capital, and not by forbidding the hiring of labourers, not by prohibiting wage labour. The revolutionary proletariat is *actually* making for the confiscation of land, farm stock and technical agricultural enterprises—for that which the peasants want, and which the Socialist-Revolutionaries *cannot* give them.

That is the way the fundamental line of the speeches of the worker to the peasant must be changed. We workers can give you, and will give you, what the poor peasants want and seek, without always knowing where and how to seek it. We workers are defending our own interests *against the capitalists*, and at the same time we are defending the interests of the overwhelming majority

of the peasantry, whereas the Socialist-Revolutionaries are allying themselves with the capitalists and betraying those interests.

\*                      \*                      \*

Let us remind the reader of what Engels said on the peasant question shortly before his death. Engels stated that Socialists did not even dream of expropriating the small peasants, and that only the *force of example* could teach the latter the advantages of socialist mechanised agriculture.

The war has now confronted Russia practically with a question of precisely this kind. There are not enough farm implements. They must be confiscated, but the highly cultivated estates must not be "divided up."

The peasants have begun to understand this. Necessity has forced them to understand it. They have been forced to understand it by the war, because farm implements are nowhere to be got. What we have must be husbanded. Large-scale farms imply the husbanding of labour expended on farm implements, as well as on much else.

The peasants want to retain their small holdings, to equalise them according to standards, and to re-equalise them periodically. . . . Let them. No intelligent Socialist will quarrel with the poor peasants on this score. If the land is confiscated it will undermine the rule of the banks; if farm property is confiscated, it will undermine the rule of capital. And *with the proletariat ruling in the centre*, with political power transferred to the proletariat, the rest will come *of itself*; it will come by "force of example," it will be prompted by experience itself.



The crux of the matter is the transfer of political power to the proletariat. Given that, everything essential and fundamental in the programme of the 242 Instructions will *become possible of realisation*. And actual experience will show what modifications are needed in the realisation. That is the last thing to worry about. We are not doctrinaires. Our teaching is not a dogma, but a guide to action.

We do not claim that Marx or the Marxists know the road to socialism in every concrete detail. That would be nonsense. We know the direction of the road, we know what class forces are following the road; but the concrete and practical details will be learned only from the experience of the millions when they begin to take action.

Trust the workers, comrades peasants; break your alliance with the capitalists! Only in close union with the workers *can* you begin to realise the programme contained in the 242 Instructions. In alliance with the capitalists and under the direction of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, you will never live to see a *single* effective and unalterable step taken in the spirit of that programme.

But when, in union with the urban workers, in a merciless struggle against capital, you *begin* to carry out the programme of the 242 Instructions, the whole world will come to your aid and to ours, and the success of this programme—not as it is now formulated, but in its essence—will be assured. That will mark the end of the domination of capital and of wage slavery. That will mark the beginning of the reign of socialism, the reign of peace, the reign of the toilers.

September 11, 1937.

(ii)

HOW THE PEASANTS WERE  
DECEIVED—AND WHY

We know that when peasant deputies from the whole of Russia assembled in Petrograd at the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies they were promised—by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and by the government—that the sale and purchase of land would be prohibited immediately.

Minister Pereverzev was at first indeed inclined to carry out this promise and sent a telegram putting a stop to all transactions involving the sale and purchase of land. But later some invisible hand intervened, and Minister Pereverzev withdrew his telegram to the public notaries, *i.e.*, he again sanctioned the sale and purchase of land.

The peasants grew uneasy. If we are not mistaken, they even sent a delegation to the Ministry.

The peasants were soothed; the peasants were reassured, as one reassures little children. They were assured that a *law* would be issued immediately prohibiting the sale and purchase of land and that Pereverzev's temporary order was "postponed" "*only*" because such a law was about to be issued.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries soothed the peasants and fed them on promise. The peasants believed them. The peasants were reassured. The peasants returned to their villages.

Weeks and weeks passed.

On July 7 (June 24)—not earlier—news appeared in the papers to the effect that Minister Chernov, leader of

the Party of Socialist-Revolutionaries, had brought a bill into the government (only a bill as yet) for the prohibition of the sale and purchase of land.

On July 12 (June 29) the papers published the report of a "private conference" of the State Duma that had taken place on July 11 (June 28). At this Conference, according to *Rech* (a paper belonging to the majority party in the Provisional Government), Mr. Rodzyanko

"in his concluding remarks dwelt on the question of transactions in land in connection with the new [oh! yes, exceedingly new, new in the extreme!] measures of the government. He maintained that if deals in land were prohibited, the land would lose its value [for whom? for the landlords, obviously! But the peasants want to take the land away from the landlords!], all security for loans would depreciate, and the landowners [the former landowners, Mr. Rodzyanko] would be deprived of credit. From what sources, asks M. V. Rodzyanko, will the landowners pay their debts to the banks? In most cases the debts are already overdue, and such a bill would lead to the immediate abolition of all landed proprietorship by law, without auctions.

"In view of this, M. V. Rodzyanko proposed that the Conference should instruct the Provisional Committee to consider this question, and endeavour to prevent the passage of a bill which would be fatal not to private ownership of land but to the state."

Here, then, we have the "invisible hand" become visible! Here we have the "cunning mechanism" of the coalition government, with its near-Socialist ministers, let out of the bag by this gentleman—this former Chairman of the former State Duma, this former landlord, this former confidant of Stolypin the Hangman, this former protector of the agent-provocateur Malinovsky—Mr. Rodzyanko!

Let us even assume that now that Mr. Rodzyanko has so clumsily blurted out more than he should, the law prohibiting the sale and purchase of land will at last be passed. At last!

But that is not the whole point. The point is that this striking example should serve to make us understand, and help the peasant masses to understand, *how the peasants were deceived*, and why. For the fact is incontrovertible and indubitable: the peasants have been deceived, since what at the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies they were promised would be fulfilled immediately was *not* fulfilled immediately.

How were the peasants deceived? They were fed on promises. That is the "cunning mechanism" employed by every coalition government in the world, *i.e.*, by every bourgeois cabinet in which traitors to socialism participate. In these cabinets, the former Socialists serve—whether consciously or not is of no importance—as tools with the help of which the capitalists deceive the masses.

*I.e.*, the bourgeois People's Freedom Party, usually known as the Cadets.—*Ed.*

Why were the peasants deceived? Because the tools of deceit, the Socialist-Revolutionaries—we will make the assumption most favourable to them—themselves failed to understand the cunning mechanism of class domination and class policy in the present administration of Russia. The Socialist-Revolutionaries allowed themselves to be led astray by talk. But as a matter of fact, and as the Rodzyanko "incident" strikingly proves, Russia is actually being ruled by a *bloc* of two *blocs*, by an alliance of two alliances.

One *bloc* is the *bloc* of the Cadets with the monarchist land-lords, among whom Mr. Rodzyanko occupies the first place. The existence of this *bloc* as a political fact was skown in the eyes of the whole of Russia during the Petrograd elections, when *all* the Black Hundred papers, all the papers to the Right of the Cadets, supported the Cadets. Thanks to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, this *bloc* has a *majority* in the government. This *bloc* delayed the prohibition of transactions involving the sale and purchase of land; this *bloc* is supporting the landlords and the *capitalist lockouters*.<sup>1</sup>

The second *bloc* is the *bloc* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, which has deceived the people by empty promises. Skobelev and Tseretelli, Peshekhonov and Chernov made promises without end. It is easy to make promises. This method of the "Socialist" ministers, namely, of feeding the people on promises, has been tried in *every* advanced country in the world, and has everywhere ended in failure. The peculiar feature of Russia is that the failure of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties will be more drastic and more precipitous than is usually the case, owing to the revolutionary situation in the country.

Let every worker and every soldier use this example, which is particularly instructive to the peasants, to explain to the peasants *how and why they were deceived*.

<sup>1</sup> Lenin calls the Russian bourgeoisie capitalist lockouters because in 1917, by disorganising industry and closing down factories, they endeavoured to establish their open dictatorship.—*Ed.*

The peasants can achieve their ends not in a *bloc* (alliance) with the capitalists, but only in alliance with the workers.

July 14, 1917.

(iii)

## A NEW DECEPTION ON THE PEASANTS

[This article appeared in *Rabochy Put* of Nov. 6, i.e., on the Eve of October Revolution.

The "New Deception" by the new Minister for Agriculture, S. Masalev of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, was acclaimed by their Party Paper, *Dyelo Naroda*, as a far-reaching step in improving the conditions of the peasantry. In short, it advocated agreement with the Landlords and was the last attempt of the S.R's. to divert the peasant masses from the revolutionary solution proposed by Lenin.

Similarly, this was the last article by Lenin before the Armed Uprising to expose the betrayal of the peasant masses and the fraud played upon them by the S.R's.

Lenin attached great significance to the exposure of the S.R's. as one of the means of winning over the peasantry, and particularly the poor peasantry, which was an urgent necessity for the success of the proletarian Revolution.

For a thorough understanding of this article, it is necessary that the reader should know something of the

"peasant question" that confronted the various political parties and how Lenin tackled that question. So, we preface this article that won the peasantry *en masse* for the revolution with two of his earlier writings: (1) "How the Peasants were deceived and why" written in connection with the demand of the peasants that the sale and purchase of land be prohibited and published in *Pravda* of July 14, 1917 and (2) "Peasants and Workers" that appeared on Sept. 11, 1917 in *Rabochy*, the Bolshevik paper. This article of Sept. 11 analyses the demands of the peasants on the Land question and concludes from "The Model Instructions" of the Socialist-Revolutionaries that these peasant Demands cannot be satisfied under bourgeois government maintained by Petty-bourgeois parties.]

In its chief newspaper, the *Dyelo Naroda*, for October 31 and November 1, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party declared solemnly and before the whole people that the new land bill of the Minister of Agriculture is "a great step towards the realisation of the agrarian programme of the party," that "the Central Committee urges all party organisations to carry on energetic propaganda in favour of the bill in order to make it popular among the masses."

In reality this bill of Minister S. L. Maslov, a member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, judging by its main features in the *Dyelo Naroda*, is a *deception of the peasants*. The Socialist-Revolutionary Party has deceived the peasants: from its own land bill it crept over to that of the landowners, of the Cadets, to the plan of "fair valuation," with retention of the landowners' property in land. The

Socialist-Revolutionary Party, at its congresses during the first (1905) and second (1917) Russian revolutions solemnly promised before the whole people to support the peasants' demand for the *confiscation* of the landowners' lands, *i.e.*, for their passing into the hands of the peasants *without compensation*. The present bill of Mr S. L. Maslov not only retains the landowners' property in land, but even the peasants' payments for "rented" lands according to a "fair" valuation, the payments *to accrue to the landlords*.

This bill of Mr. S. L. Maslov is a complete betrayal of the peasants by the Socialist-Revolutionary Party; it means that this party has completely become an adherent for the landowners. We must strain all our forces, we must use every effort to spread among the peasants recognition of this truth.

The *Dyelo Naroda* of October 31 printed paragraphs 25-40 of S. L. Maslov's bill. Here are the main and fundamental points of that bill:

1. *Not all* landowners' lands go into the 'provisional rent fund' to be formed.

2. The landowners' lands are to be transferred into that fund by *land committees* created under the law of the *landowners'* government of Prince Lvov, May 4, 1917.

3. Rents for these landowners' lands to be paid by the peasants are fixed by the land committees "according to the net income derived." After subtraction of other payments, they accrue "to the respective owners," *i.e.*, *to the landowners*.



This is a triple deception of the peasants by the Socialist Revolutionaries, and it is therefore necessary to dwell on each of these three points in greater detail.

In the *Izvestiya* of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasant Deputies, No. 88, September I, was printed a "model instruction" compiled on the basis of 242 instructions brought from the respective localities by the deputies to the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Peasant Deputies in Petrograd in 1917.

*This compilation of 242 instructions made by the elected representatives of local peasants is the best material to judge what the peasants want.* And this combined instruction shows with perfect clarity the deception of the peasantry by the bill of S. L. Maslov and the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

The peasants demand the abolition of the right of private property in land; conversion of *all* the privately owned land into the property of the whole people without compensation; conversion of landed estates with highly developed agriculture (orchards, plantations, etc.) into "model farms," to be used "exclusively by the state and communities"; confiscation of "*all* agricultural inventory, both livestock and implements," etc.

Thus the demands of the peasants are expressed, precisely and clearly, on the basis of 242 local instructions, given by the peasants themselves.

At the same time, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, farming a "coalition" (i.e., an alliance or an agreement) with the bourgeoisie (capitalists) and landowners, participating in a government of capitalists and landowners, has

now drawn up a bill *which does not do away with landowners' property, which transfers only part of the landowners' lands into a provisional rent fund !!*

According to the bill, no orchards, plantations, sugar-beet fields, etc., may be transferred to the rent fund! No transfer to the rent fund is permissible of lands necessary "to satisfy the needs of the owner himself, his family his employees and workers, as well as to secure the maintenance of the existing livestock" !!

That means that a rich landowner who has a sugar or a starch factory, an oil press or flour mills, hundreds of heads of livestock and dozens of employees or workers, *retains a great economic enterprise, which is of a capitalist nature at that.* This is how shamelessly, how brazenly the Socialist-Revolutionary Party has deceived the peasants.

The transfer of the landowners'—or, according to the bill, "privately owned"—lands to the rent fund is being effected by *land committees* created under the law of May 4, 1917, by the *landowners' government of Prince Lvov* and Co.—that government of the Milyukovs and Guchkovs, the imperialists and the robbers of the masses of the people, which the workers and soldiers of Petrograd crushed by the movement of May 3-4, *i.e.*, fully half a year ago.

Obviously, the law of this landowners' government on land committees is far from being a democratic (people's) law. On the contrary, there are in this law a number of most shameless deviations from democracy. For instance, § 11 of this law gives "to the province land committees the

right to stop the execution of the decisions of volost and country committees pending the final decision of the central land committee." The committees, however, according to this trickily written landowners' law, are so organised that the country committee is less democratic than the volost committee, the province committee less democratic than the country committee, and the central committee less democratic than the province committee!

The whole volost land committee is elected by the population of the volost. The country committee, according to the law, includes, for instance, such persons as the justice of the peace and five members, from the temporary executive committees" (pending the organisation of the new local government. The province committee includes not only a member of the circuit court and a justice of the peace, but also a representative of the Cabinet *appointed* by the Minister, etc. The central land committee contains twenty-seven members included "by invitation of the Provisional Government!" It includes one representative from each of the eleven political parties, of whom a majority (six out of eleven) was given to the *Cadets and the parties to the right of them*. Is this not a fraud on the part of Lvov, Shingarev (who signed the law) and their bosom friends? Is this not a mockery of democracy to please the landowners?

Doesn't this fully prove the correctness of the declaration repeatedly made by the Bolsheviks that only *Soviets of Peasant Deputies*, elected by the *masses of the toilers* and revocable at any time, are able correctly to express the will of the peasantry and carry it out in practice?

The S.-R.'s who, thanks to the unenlightened trustfulness of the peasants, obtained a majority in the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Soviets of Peasant Deputies, have *betrayed* the peasants' Soviets, *have gone over to the side of the landowners* and have reconciled themselves to the law of the landowner Prince Lvov concerning the land committees. Therein lies the second chief deception of the peasants by the S.-R.'s.

This is why we, the workers' party, must with the greatest insistence repeat the demand of the Bolsheviks: all power in the village to the Soviets of Peasant Deputies and deputies of the agricultural labourers!

The peasant instructions demand confiscation, expropriation of the landowners' land *without compensation*, confiscation of the horse-breeding farms, private cattle and poultry farms, transfer to the state of all estates with intensive modern cultivation, confiscation of all inventory, livestock and implements, of the landowners' estates.

Instead of this, the ministerial bill of the S.-R.'s treats the peasants to a *retention of rent payments* to go, as hitherto, into the landowners' pockets!

"Rent payments," says § 33 of the bill of the S.-R.'s, "are made to the committees which" (having made due payments to the state, etc.) "hand over the remainder to the respective owners."

This is how the "Socialist-Revolutionaries," having deceived the peasants by exuberant promises, have presented the peasants with a land bill of the *landowners and Cadets!!*

• This is a complete deception of the peasants.

Nothing at all remains here of the peasants' demands for confiscation. This is not confiscation of the landowners' holdings: this is a *consolidation* of them by the "republican" government which *guarantees* the landowners *retention* of their livestock and implements, of land for the maintenance of "employees and workers," of land "selected" ('selection' alone is sufficient!') "by the owners for planting sugar beets and other commercial plants," as well as *payment* for all the other land transferred to the land fund. The land committees are turned into *collectors* of *land payments* for the noble landowners!'

Landowners' property is not being wiped out, but consolidated by the S.-R.'s. Their going over to the side of the landowners, their betrayal of the peasants is revealed now as clearly as can be.

We must not let ourselves be fooled by the shrewd Cadets, those faithful friends of the capitalists and landowners. The Cadets make it appear that the bill of the S.-R.'s is extraordinarily "revolutionary." All the bourgeois papers have raised a rumpus *against* the bill; everywhere notes have been published concerning the "*opposition*" of the bourgeois Ministers (and of course, their close henchmen like Kerensky) to this "terrible" bill. All this is comedy, a game, a price set by a haggling merchant who sees the spinelessness of the S.-R.'s and hopes to drive a better bargain. In reality S. L. Maslov's bill is a "landowners'" bill written for conciliation with the landowners, for the purpose of saving them.

The above issues of the *Dyelo Naroda* call this bill "an outstanding land bill starting (!) the great (!) reform of

the socialisation (!!!) of the land." This is charlatanism of the purest water. There is not a trace of "socialisation" in the bill (except perhaps "social" aid to the landowner to secure his land payments); there is nothing at all "revolutionary and democratic;" there is nothing in it outside of "reforms" of the Irish type usually found in European *bourgeois reformism*.

We repeat, this is a bill for the purpose of saving the landowners, for "quieting" the *rising* peasant movement by means of trivial concessions that retain the major rights for the landowners.

The introduction of such a shameful bill by the S.-R.'s into the Cabinet is an object lesson of the unheard-of hypocrisy of those who denounce the plans of the Bolsheviks concerning the passing of power to the Soviets as "undermining" the Constituent Assembly. "Only forty days separate us from the Constituent Assembly," is the hypocritical cry of the Cadets, capitalists, landowners, Mensheviks, and S.-R.'s! In the meantime a momentous land bill is being introduced into the Cabinet, a bill *defrauding* the peasants, *enslaving* them to the landowners, consolidating the landowners' property in the land.

When it is necessary to support the landowners against the growing peasant uprising, then it is "possible" to carry through a tremendous bill forty or even only thirty days before the Constituent Assembly.

But when it is a question of transferring all power to the Soviets in order to give *all* the land to the peasants, in order *immediately*, to do away with landowners' property in land, in order *immediately* to offer a just peace—oh, then

the Cadets, the capitalists, the landowners, the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s raise a concerted howl against the Bolsheviks.

Let the peasants know how the Socialist-Revolutionary Party has betrayed them, how it has delivered them to the landowners.

Let the peasants know that only the *workers' party*, only the *Bolsheviks* are firmly and irrevocably *against* the capitalists, *against* the landowners, for the interests of the poorest peasantry and *all* the toilers.

N. LENIN.

Written November 2, 1917.

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## PART VIII

(i)

### LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

[On the eve of the Armed uprising of the workers and Soldiers of Petrograd, this last and decisive warning was given by Lenin in the form of a letter to the members of the C. C.

He emphatically demands the overthrow of the Provisional Government and points out how it is absolutely essential.

A great amount of preparatory work had already been made by the C. C. and the local committees of Petrograd, Moscow, Helsingfors, Kronstad and on the N. W. Front among the Soldiers and among the workers in various centres for Armed insurrection. Party organisation has established contacts, secured weapons and fixed the time for action in various localities.

Lenin knew of these preparations and in view of the crisis, proclaimed that it was dangerous to the Revolution to delay or postpone uprising.

Certainly, Lenin was not mistaken. For, on the night of Nov. 6, the Workers and Soldiers of the Garrison of Petrograd, led by the Bolshevik Party, overthrew the Provisional Government of Kerensky.]

Comrades :

I am writing these lines on the evening of the 6th. The situation is extremely critical. It is as clear as can be that delaying the uprising now really means death.



With all my power I wish to persuade the comrades that now everything hangs on a hair, that on the order of the day are questions that are not solved by conferences, by congresses (even by Congresses of Soviets), but only by people, by the masses, by the struggle of armed masses.

The bourgeois onslaught of the Kornilovists, the removal of Verkhovsky show that we must not wait. We must at any price, this evening, tonight, arrest the Ministers, having disarmed (defeated if they offer resistance) the military cadets, etc.

We must not wait! We may lose everything!

The immediate gain from the seizure of power at present is: defence of *the people* (not the congress, but the people, in the first place, the army and the peasants) against the Kornilovist government which has driven out Verkhovsky and has hatched a second Kornilov plot.

Who should seize power?

At present this is not important. Let the Military Revolutionary Committee seize it, or "some other institution" which declares that it will relinquish the power only to the real representatives of the interests of the people, the interests of the army (immediate offer of peace), the interests of the peasants (take the land immediately, abolish private property), the interests of the hungry.

It is necessary that all the boroughs, all regiments, all forces should be mobilised and should immediately send delegations to the Military Revolutionary Committee, to the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks, insistently demanding that under no circumstances is power to be left in the hands of Kerensky and Co. until the 7th, by no

means!—but that the matter must absolutely be decided this evening or tonight.

History will not forgive delay by revolutionists who could be victorious today (and will surely be victorious today), while they risk losing much tomorrow, they risk losing all.

If we seize power today, we seize it not against the Soviets but for them.

Seizure of power is the point of the uprising; its political task will be clarified after the seizure.

It would be a disaster or formalism to wait for the uncertain voting of November 7. The people have a right and a duty to decide such questions not by voting but by force; the people have a right and duty in critical moments of a revolution to give directions to their representatives, even their best representatives, and not to wait for them.

This has been proven by the history of all revolutions, and the crime of revolutionists would be limitless if they let go the proper moment, knowing that upon them depends the *saving of the revolution*, the offer of peace, the saving of Petrograd, the saving from starvation, the transfer of the land to the peasants.

The government is tottering. We must *deal it the death blow* at any cost.

To delay action is the same as death.

Written November 6, 1917.

(ii)

THE SECOND CONGRESS OF THE  
SOVIETS*November 7-8, 1917.*

[The Workers of Petrograd in alliance with the Petrograd garrison overthrew the Provisional government of Kerensky on the 7th of November, 1917. Thus the seizure of Power was accomplished without much bloodshed.

The vast majority of the workers all over the country had completely accepted the leadership of Bolshevik Party. The peasantry had deserted their Socialist-Revolutionary leaders and took to direct action led by the Leninist Party. The advanced sections of the poor peasantry had joined the workers. Part of the Army was also active in their support of the revolution. Such were the conditions when the Second Congress of the Soviets assembled at the *Smolny*.

Late in the evening on the 7th Nov, 1917, the Second Congress of the Soviets opened. It was attended by 670 delegates. The majority of the delegates consisted of Bolsheviks (400) and Left-Socialist-Revolutionaries (69). Thus a majority for the Bolsheviks was assured.

This Congress defined its attitude to revolution in the manifesto "To the Workers, Soldiers and Peasants," written by Lenin and adopted by the Congress.

At the Second Session of the Congress on Nov. 8, the report on the Peace question and the report on the land were heard. Later, the Congress adopted the Decree on peace and the Decree on Land, compiled by Lenin. At

the same Session, it was decided to form a Soviet Government and an All-Russian Central committee of 105 members was elected. There were 69 Bolsheviks on the Executive Committee.]

### **To the Workers, Soldiers and Peasants**

The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies has begun. A vast majority of the Soviets are represented at the Congress. There are also present a number of delegates from the Peasants' Soviets. The mandate of the compromising Central Executive Committee has terminated. Backed by the will of the vast majority of workers, soldiers and peasants, backed by the successful uprising of the workers and of the garrison in Petrograd, the Congress takes the power of government into its hands.

The Provisional Government has been overthrown. The majority of the members of the Provisional Government are already arrested.

The Soviet government will propose an immediate democratic peace to all peoples and an immediate armistice on all fronts. It will secure the transfer of the estates of the landlords, appanages and monasterial lands to the control of the peasants' committees without compensation; it will protect the rights of the soldiers by introducing complete democracy in the army; it will establish workers' control over production; it will see to it that the Constituent Assembly is convened at its appointed time; it will see to it that bread is supplied to the cities and articles of prime necessity to the villages; it will guarantee

all the nations inhabiting Russia the genuine right of self-determination.

The Congress decrees: all power in the localities shall pass to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which must guarantee genuine revolutionary order.

The Congress calls upon the soldiers in the trenches to be watchful and firm. The Congress of Soviets is convinced that the revolutionary army will succeed in defending the revolution from all attacks of imperialism until such time as the new government succeeds in concluding a democratic peace, which it will propose directly to all the peoples. The new government will take measures to supply all the needs of the revolutionary army by resorting to a determined policy of requisitioning and taxation of the propertied classes, and also to improve the condition of the soldiers' families.

The Kornilovists—Kerensky, Kaledin and others—are attempting to bring troops against Petrograd. A few detachments, who, duped by Kerensky, had moved on Petrograd, have come over to the side of the people in revolt.

*Soldiers, actively resist the Kornilovist Kerensky! Be on your guard!*

*Railwaymen, hold up the troop trains despatched by Kerensky against Petrograd!*

*Soldiers, workers, and employees, the fate of the revolution and the fate of the democratic peace is in your hands!*

*Long live the Revolution !*

*The All Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers'  
and Soldiers' Deputies*

*The Delegates from the Peasants' Soviets.*

November 8 (October 26), 1917.

### **Report on the Peace Question, November 8, 1917.**

The question of peace is a burning and painful question of the day. Much has been said and written on the subject, and you have all, no doubt, discussed it not a little. Permit me, therefore, to proceed to read a declaration which the government you have elected must publish.

#### *Decree on Peace*

The workers' and peasants' government created by the revolution of November 6-7 and backed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just and democratic peace.

By a just, or democratic, peace, for which the vast majority of the working and toiling classes of all belligerent countries, exhausted, tormented and racked by the war, are craving, a peace that has been most definitely and insistently demanded by the Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy—by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations (*i.e.*, the seizure of foreign lands, or the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and indemnities.

The government of Russia calls upon all the belligerent nations to conclude such a peace immediately, and expresses its readiness to take the most resolute measures

without the least delay, pending the final ratification of the conditions of this peace by plenipotentiary assemblies of the people's representatives of all countries and all nations.

In accordance with the sense of justice of the democracy in general, and of the toiling classes in particular, the government interprets the annexation, or seizure, of foreign lands as meaning the incorporation into a large and powerful state of a small or feeble nation without the definitely, clearly and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that nation, irrespective of the time such forcible incorporation took place, irrespective of the degree of development or backwardness of the nation forcibly annexed to, or forcibly retained within, the frontiers of the given state, and finally, irrespective of whether the nation inhabits Europe or distant, overseas countries.

If any nation whatsoever is forcibly retained within the boundaries of a given state, if, in spite of its expressed desire—no matter whether that desire is expressed in the press, at popular meetings, in party decisions, or in protests and revolts against national oppression—it is not permitted the right to decide the forms of its state existence by a free vote, taken after the complete evacuation of the troops of the incorporating or, generally, of the stronger nation, without the least pressure being brought to bear upon it, such incorporation is annexation, *i.e.*, seizure and coercion.

The government considers that it would be the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war for the purpose of dividing up among the strong and rich nations

the feeble nationalities seized by them, and solemnly declares its determination to sign immediately conditions of peace terminating this war on the conditions indicated, which are equally just for all peoples without exception.

At the same time the government declares that it does not regard the above-mentioned terms of peace as an ultimatum ; in other words, it is prepared to consider any other conditions of peace, but only insists that they be advanced as speedily as possible by any of the belligerent nations, and that in the conditions of peace proposed there should be absolute clarity and the complete absence of all ambiguity and secrecy.

The government abolishes secret diplomacy and, for its part, expresses its firm determination to conduct all negotiations quite openly before the whole people. It will immediately proceed to the full publication of the secret treaties ratified or concluded by the government of landlords and capitalists during the period March to November 7, 1917. The government proclaims the absolute and immediate annulment of the contents of all such secret treaties, since they are aimed, as in the majority of cases they are, at securing advantages and privileges for the Russian landlords and capitalists and at the retention, or extension, of the annexations made by the Great-Russians.

Appealing to the governments and peoples of all countries immediately to begin open negotiations for the conclusion of peace, the government, for its part, expresses its readiness to conduct such negotiations in writing or by telegraph, or by negotiations between representatives of the various countries, or at a conference of representatives.



In order to facilitate such negotiations, the government is commissioning its plenipotentiary representatives to neutral countries.

The government proposes to all the governments and peoples of the belligerent countries to conclude an immediate armistice and, for its part, considers it desirable that the armistice should be concluded for no less than three months, *i.e.*, for a period long enough to permit the conclusion of negotiations for peace with the participation of the representatives of all peoples and nations involved in or compelled to take part in the war, without exception, and the summoning of plenipotentiary assemblies of the representatives of the peoples of all countries for the final ratification of the terms of peace.

While addressing this proposal for peace to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia appeals in particular to the class conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind, the largest states participating in the present war, namely, Great Britain, France and Germany. The workers of these countries have made the greatest contributions to the cause of progress and socialism: they have furnished the great examples of the Chartist movement in England, a number of revolutions of world and historic importance made by the French proletariat, and, finally, the heroic struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany and the example shown to the workers of the whole world in the protracted, persistent and disciplined work of creating mass proletarian organisations in Germany. All these examples of pro-

letarian heroism and historical creative work serve as a pledge that the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the duty that now lies upon them of emancipating mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences. For these workers, by comprehensive, determined, and supremely energetic action, can help us to bring to a successful conclusion the cause of peace, and at the same time the cause of the emancipation of the toiling and exploited masses of the population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government created by the revolution of November 6-7 and backed by the Soviets of Workers,' Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, must begin immediate negotiations for peace. Our appeal must be directed both to the governments and to the peoples. We cannot ignore the governments, for that would delay the possibility of concluding peace, and the people's government dare not do that: but we have no right not to appeal to the peoples at the same time. Everywhere there are differences between the governments and the peoples, and we must therefore help the peoples to interfere in the question of war and peace. We will, of course, insist upon the whole of our programme for a peace without annexations and indemnities. We shall not retreat from that programme; but we must deprive our enemies of the opportunity of declaring that their conditions are different from ours and that therefore it is useless to start negotiations with us. No, we must deprive them of that advantageous position and not advance our terms in the form of

an ultimatum. Therefore the point is included that we are ready to consider all term of peace and all proposals. We shall consider them, but that does not necessarily mean that we shall accept them. We shall submit them to the consideration of the Constituent Assembly, which will have the power to decide what concessions can or cannot be made. We are combating the duplicity of governments which in words talk of peace and justice, but in fact wage annexationist and predatory wars. There is not a single government that will say all it thinks. We, however, are opposed to secret diplomacy and will act openly in the eyes of the whole people. We do not, and never did, close our eyes to difficulties. War cannot be ended by refusal, it cannot be ended by one side only. We are proposing an armistice for three months, but shall not reject a shorter period, so that the exhausted army may breathe freely even for a little while, and because, moreover, in all the civilised countries national assemblies must be summoned for the discussion of terms.

In proposing the conclusion of an immediate armistice, we appeal to the class conscious workers of the countries that have done so much for the development of the proletarian movement. We appeal to the workers of England, where there was the Chartist movement, to the workers of France, who have in repeated insurrections displayed the strength of their class consciousness, and to the workers of Germany, who waged the fight against the Anti-Socialist Law and have created powerful organisations.

In the manifesto of March 27 we called for the overthrow of the bankers, but, far from overthrowing our own

bankers, we entered into an alliance with them. Now we have overthrown the government of the bankers.

The government and the bourgeoisie will make every effort to unite their forces and drown the workers' and peasants' revolution in blood. But the three years of war have been a good lesson to the masses: Soviet movements in other countries, the mutiny in the German fleet, which was crushed by the *Junkers* of the hangman Wilhelm. Finally, we must remember that we are not living in the wilds of Africa, but in Europe, where news can spread quickly,

The workers' movement will triumph and will lay the path to peace and to socialism.

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### Report on the Land Question, November 8, 1917

We consider that the revolution has demonstrated and proved how important it is that the land question should be stated clearly. The outbreak of the armed insurrection, the second, or October, Revolution, clearly proves that the land must be handed over to the peasants. A crime was committed by the government that has been overthrown and by the compromising parties of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who kept postponing the settlement of the land question on various pretexts and thereby brought the country to a state of ruin and faced it with a peasant revolt. False, cowardly and deceitful sound their statements regarding the pogroms and anarchy in the villages. Where and when did pogroms and anarchy result from wise measures? If the government had acted wisely, and if their measures had met the needs of the

peasant poor, would there have been unrest among the peasant masses? But all the measures of the government, approved by the Ayksentyev and Dan Soviets, were directed against the peasants and forced them into revolt.

Having brought about an insurrection, the government began to howl about the pogroms and anarchy for which they themselves were responsible. They would fain have crushed the insurrection by blood and iron, but were themselves swept away by the armed revolt of the revolutionary soldiers, sailors and workers. The first duty of the government of the workers' and peasant' revolution is to settle the land question, which can pacify and satisfy the vast masses of the peasant poor. I shall read you the points of a decree your Soviet government must issue. In one of the points of that decree are embodied the Instructions to the Land Committees which have been compiled from 242 Instructions from local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

*Decree on the Land*

(1) Landed proprietorship is abolished forthwith without compensation.

(2) The landed estates, as also all appanages, the monasterial and church lands, with all their livestock, implements, farm buildings and everything pertaining thereto, shall be placed under the control of the volost Land Committees and the uyezdz Soviets of Peasants' Deputies pending the meeting of the Constituent Assembly.

(3) All damage to confiscated property, which henceforth belongs to the whole people, is declared to be a felony, punishable by the revolutionary courts. The uyezdz

Soviets of Peasants' Deputies shall take all necessary measures for the preservation of the strictest order during the confiscation of the estates of the landlords, for determining estates of which size and which particular estates shall be subject to confiscation, for drawing up inventories of all property confiscated and for the strictest revolutionary protection of all land transferred to the people and all structures, implements, cattle, supplies, etc.

(4) The following peasant Instructions, compiled from 242 local peasant Instructions, as published in No. 88 of the *Izvestiya* of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies (Petrograd, September 1 1917), are everywhere to serve as a guide in carrying through the great land reforms pending their final ratification by the Constituent Assembly.

(5) The land of ordinary peasants and ordinary Cossacks shall not be confiscated.

### **The Peasant Instructions on the Land**

The question of the land in its full scope can be settled only by a National Constituent Assembly

The most just settlement of the land question is as follows .

(1) *The right of private property in land shall be abolished in perpetuity* land shall not be purchased, sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise alienated.

All land, whether *state, appanage, tsar's, monasterial, church, factory, primogenitory, private, public, peasant, etc.*, shall be taken over without compensation and become the property of the whole people, to be used by those who cultivate it.

Persons who suffer by this property revolution shall be entitled to public support only for a period necessary for adaptation to their new conditions of existence

(2) All mineral wealth, *e.g.*, ore, oil, coal, salt, etc., as well as all forests and waters of state importance, shall be reserved for the exclusive use of the state. Small streams, lakes, woods, etc., shall be reserved for the use of the communes and be administered by the local government bodies.

(3) Lands with *highly* developed forms of cultivation, *e.g.*, orchards, plantations, nurseries hothouses, etc., *shall not be divided up, but shall be transformed into model farms to be cultivated exclusively either by the state or by the communes*, according to their size and importance.

Urban and village household land, orchards and gardens shall remain in the use of their present owners, the size of such holdings, and the amount of taxation levied for the use thereof, to be determined by law.

(4) Stud farms, government and private pedigree stock and poultry farms, etc., shall be confiscated and become the property of the whole people; they shall be run exclusively by the state or by the communes, according to their size and importance.

In the text of the Decree on the Land as originally printed point 5 comes after the Peasant Instructions on the Land Question, which appertain to point 4,—*Ed.*

The question of compensation is subject to the decision of the Constituent Assembly.

(5) All livestock and farm implements of the confiscated lands shall be reserved for the exclusive use of either the state or the communes, according to their size and importance, and no compensation shall be paid therefor.

The farm implements of peasants possessing little land shall not be subject to confiscation.

(6) The right to use the land shall belong to all citizens of the Russian state (without distinction of sex) desiring to cultivate it by their own labour, with the help of their families, or in partnership, and only as long as they are able to cultivate it by their own efforts. The employment of hired labour is prohibited.

In the event of the accidental physical disablement of any member of a village community for a period of two years, the village community shall be obliged to assist him within this period by means of collective cultivation of his land, until he is again able to work.

Peasants who, owing to age or ill-health, are permanently disabled from personally cultivating the land shall lose their right to the use of it, but, in return, shall receive a pension from the state.

(7) Land tenure shall be on an equality basis, *i.e.*, the land shall be distributed among the toilers in conformity with either the labour standard or the consumption standard, as local conditions shall warrant.

There shall be absolutely no restriction as to the forms of land tenure: household, farm, communal, or co-operative, as shall be determined in each individual village.

(8) All land, when alienated, shall pass into the land fund of the people. Its distribution among the toilers shall be controlled by the local and central government bodies, from democratically organised village and city communes, without distinction of social rank, to central oblast government bodies.

The land fund shall be subject to periodical redistribution, in accordance with the growth of population and the increase in the productiveness and efficiency of agriculture.

When the boundaries of allotments are altered, the primary nucleus of the allotment must be left intact.

The land of lapsed members shall revert to the land fund; preferential right to such land shall belong to the near relatives of the lapsed member, or to persons designated by him.

In the case of land which has reverted to the land fund, the cost of fertiliser and improvements put into the soil, to the extent that they have not been fully exhausted, shall be compensated.

Should the available land fund in a particular district prove inadequate for the needs of the population, the surplus population shall be settled elsewhere.



The state shall take upon itself the organisation of resettlement and shall bear the cost thereof, as well as the cost of supplying implements, etc.

Resettlement shall be effected in the following order : first of all, landless peasants desiring to resettle, then members of the commune of depraved or vicious habits, deserters, and so on, and the remainder by lot or by agreement.

The entire contents of these Instructions, as expressing the absolute will of the vast majority of the class conscious peasants of the whole of Russia, are declared a provisional law, which, pending the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, shall be carried into effect as far as possible immediately, and as to certain of its provisions with the due gradualness, as shall be determined by the uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

I hear voices stating that the decree itself and the Instructions were drawn up by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Be it so. Does it matter who drew it up? As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the rank and file of the people, even though we may disagree with it; in the fire of experience, applying the decree in practice, and carrying it out locally, the peasants will themselves understand where the truth lies. And even if the peasants continue to follow the Socialist-Revolutionaries, even if they give this party a majority in the Constituent Assembly, we shall still say, be it so. Experience is the best teacher and it will show who is right. Let the peasant solve this problem from one end and us from the other. Experience will bring us closer in the general stream of revolutionary creation, in the

elaboration of new state forms. We must follow experience : we must allow complete freedom for the creative faculties of the masses. The old government, which was swept away by armed insurrection, tried to settle the land question with the help of the old tsarist bureaucracy, which remained intact. But instead of solving the question the bureaucracy fought the peasants. The peasants have learned something during the eight months of revolution ; they want themselves to settle all questions concerning the land. Therefore we declare ourselves opposed to all amendments to this draft law. We want no details in it, for we are writing a decree, not a programme of action. Russia is great, and local conditions vary. We believe that the peasants will be able to solve the problem correctly, better than we could ourselves. Whether in our spirit, or in the spirit of the programme of the Socialist-Revolutionaries is not the point. The point is that the peasants should be firmly assured that there are no more landlords in the countryside, that they must themselves arrange their own lives.

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**Annual Rs. 4-8 : Single Copy As 6**

**“ VIPLAVA ” Office, GANESHGANG,**

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PART IX  
APPENDIX

Statement By G. Zinoviev and U. Kamenev

*October 24, 1917.*

Dear Comrades :

At the last session of the C. C. we were in the minority and the two of us voted against the theses adopted. In view of the importance of the question we found it necessary to expound in the special statement attached hereto a brief resume of the speeches made by us during the session, and we request you to attach this statement to the minutes of the meeting. We consider it our duty to acquaint the Petrograd Committee, the Moscow Committee, the Moscow Regional Committee and the Finnish Regional Committee with this statement. The form which we have given to the statement you will of course understand without comment.

G. ZINOVIEV.

U. KAMENEV.

To the Petrograd, Moscow Regional, and Finnish Regional Committees of the R.S.-D.L.P., the Bolshevik fraction of the C.E.C. of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the Bolshevik fraction of the congress of the Soviets of the Northern Region :

*On the Present Situation*

In connection with the political situation, the withdrawal of the Bolsheviks from the pre-parliament put before our party the question :

What next?

In labour circles there is developing and growing a current of thought which sees the only outcome in the immediate declaration of an armed uprising. The interaction of all the conditions at present is such that if we are to speak of such an uprising a definite date must be set for it and that within the next few days. In one or another form this question is already being discussed by the entire press and at Workers' meetings, and is occupying the minds of a substantial group of party workers. We on our part consider it our duty and our right to express ourselves on this question with complete frankness.

We are deeply convinced that to call at present for an armed uprising means to stake on one card not only the fate of our party, but also the fate of the Russian and international revolution.

There is no doubt that there are historical situations when an oppressed class must recognise that it is better to go forward to defeat than to give up without a battle. Does the Russian working class find itself at present in such a situation? *No, and a thousand times no!!!*

As a result of the immense growth of the influence of our party in the cities, and particularly in the army, there has come about at present a situation such that it is becoming more and more impossible for the bourgeoisie to obstruct the Constituent Assembly. Through the army, through the workers, we hold a revolver at the temple of the bourgeoisie: the bourgeoisie is put in such a position that if it should undertake now to attempt to obstruct the Constituent Assembly, it would again push the petty-

bourgeois parties to one side, and the revolver would go off.

The chances of our party in the elections to the Constituent Assembly are excellent. The talk that the influence of Bolshevism is beginning to wane, etc., we consider to have absolutely no foundation. In the mouths of our political opponents this assertion is simply a move in the political game, having as its purpose this very thing, to provoke an uprising of the Bolsheviks under conditions favourable to our enemies. The influence of the Bolsheviks is increasing. Whole strata of the labouring population are only now beginning to be drawn in by it. With correct tactics we can get a third and even more of the seats in the Constituent Assembly. The attitude of the petty-bourgeois parties in the Constituent Assembly can not possibly be the same then as it is now. In the first place their slogan: "For land, for freedom, wait for the Constituent Assembly," will drop out. And aggravation of want, hunger, and the peasant movement, will exert more and more pressure on them and will compel them to seek an alliance with the proletarian party, against the landowners and capitalists represented by the Cadet Party.

The Constituent Assembly, by itself, cannot of course abolish the present camouflaging of these interrelations. The Soviets, which have become rooted in life, can not be destroyed. The Constituent Assembly will be able to find support for its revolutionary work only in the Soviets. The Constituent Assembly plus the Soviets--this is that combined type of state institutions towards which we are

going. It is on this political basis that our party is acquiring enormous chances for a real victory.

We have never said that the Russian working class *alone*, by its own forces, would be able to bring the present revolution to a victorious conclusion. We have not forgotten, must not forget even now, that between us and the bourgeoisie there stands a huge third camp: the petty bourgeoisie. This camp joined us during the days of the Kornilov affair and gave us victory. It will join us many times more. We must not permit ourselves to be hypnotised by what is the case at the present moment. Undoubtedly, at present this camp is much nearer to the bourgeoisie than to us. But the present situation is not eternal, nor even durable. And only by a careless step, by some hasty action which will make the whole fate of the revolution dependent upon an immediate uprising, will the proletarian party push the petty bourgeoisie into the arms of Milyukov *for a long time*.

We are told: (1) that the majority of the people of Russia is already with us, and (2) that the majority of the international proletariat is with us. Alas!—neither the one nor the other is true, and this is the crux of the entire situation.

In Russia a majority of the workers and a substantial part of the soldiers are with us. But all the rest is dubious. We are all convinced, for instance, that if elections to the Constituent Assembly were to take place now, a majority of the peasants would vote for the S.-R.'s. What is this, an accident? The masses of the soldiers support us not because of the slogan of war, but because of the slogan of

peace. This is an extremely important circumstance and unless we take it into consideration we would be risking building on sand. If, having taken power at present by ourselves, we should come to the conclusion (in view of the whole world situation) that it is necessary to wage a revolutionary war, the masses of the soldiers will rush away from us. The best part of the army youth will, of course, remain with us, but the masses of the soldiers will turn away. The criminality of the imperialist government consists in the very fact that by serving the interests of the Russian and the Allied bourgeoisie, it undermined the economic forces of the country at their very root, it disorganised the country and thereby deprived the revolutionary people of the possibility of defending itself against the appetites of world imperialism, by means of a revolutionary war. After forty months of imperialist war in a country ruined by the rule of marauders, under conditions of economic ruin that were created by tsarism and continued by the rule of the bourgeoisie, the exhausted soldiers are less and less able to carry through a victorious war against international capitalism.

Those same delegates from the front who are now conducting such agitation against the war, are directly asking our orators not to speak about revolutionary war, for that will estrange the soldiers. This is an extremely important symptom

There is no doubt that a proletarian government would immediately undertake to pass the economic burdens of the war on to the bourgeoisie, would leave for the bourgeoisie "only crumbs of bread" and "take away its shoes."

This ought to raise the enthusiasm of the masses. But this does not yet guarantee victory over German imperialism in a revolutionary war. Present-day Russia, which in spite of the working class permitted itself to be drained by the imperialist war, would still remain a country with comparatively backward technique, with a dilapidated railroad system, without commodities, without the necessary military technical equipment, etc. Having taken power, the workers' party thereby undoubtedly deals a blow to Wilhelm. It will be harder for him to carry on a war against revolutionary Russia, offering an immediate democratic peace. This is so. But will this blow under present conditions, after Riga, etc., be sufficiently powerful to turn away the hand of German imperialism from Russia? If separate negotiations between German and English imperialisms have begun—and this is almost beyond doubt—would they not then continue these negotiations further even after our victory, and would not Wilhelm then still succeed in getting to Petrograd? Where then are the data which indicate that the proletarian party alone, and while the petty-bourgeois democracy is resisting, must take the responsibility for such a state of affairs and its inevitable consequences upon itself and upon itself alone.

And here we come to the second assertion—that the majority of the international proletariat allegedly is already with us. Unfortunately this is not so. The mutiny in the German navy has an immense symptomatic significance. There are portents of a serious movement in Italy. But from that to any sort of active support of the



proletarian revolution in Russia which is declaring war on the entire bourgeois world is still very far. It is extremely harmful to overestimate forces. Undoubtedly much is given to us and much will be demanded from us. But if we now, having staked the entire game upon one card, suffer defeat, we shall deal a cruel blow to the international proletarian revolution, which is developing extremely slowly, but which is nevertheless developing. Moreover, the development of the revolution in Europe will make it obligatory for us, without any hesitation whatever, immediately to take power into our own hands. This is also the only guarantee of the victory of an uprising of the proletariat in Russia. It will come, but it is not yet here.

In what perspective then does the immediate future present itself to us? Here is our answer.

It stands to reason that our path does not depend upon ourselves alone. The enemy *may compel* us to accept decisive battle before the elections to the Constituent Assembly. Attempts at a new Kornilov affair will of course not leave us even the elections. We will then, of course, be unanimous in the only possible decision. But at that time a substantial part of the petty-bourgeois camp too will surely support us again. The flight of the government to Moscow will push the masses of the petty bourgeoisie over to us. And then the conditions will have been created for our victory; then we shall not be defeated, but our opponents will be defeated.

But in so far as the choice depends upon us, we can and we must limit ourselves to a *defensive position*. The Provisional Government is often powerless to carry into

execution its counter-revolutionary intentions. It is going to pieces. The strength of the soldiers and workers is sufficient to prevent the realisation of such steps by Kerensky and Company. The peasant movement has only just begun. The mass suppression of the peasant movement by the Cadets cannot succeed with the sentiment of the army as it now is. The Provisional Government is powerless to fix up the elections to the Constituent Assembly. Sympathy with our party will grow. The bloc of the Cadets, the Mensheviks and the S.-R.'s will fall apart. In the Constituent Assembly we shall be such a strong opposition party that in a country of universal suffrage our opponents will be compelled to make concessions to us at every step, or we will form, together with the Left S.-R.' non-party peasants, etc., a ruling bloc which will fundamentally have to carry out our programme. This is our opinion.

Before history, before the international proletariat, before the Russian Revolution and the Russian working class, we have no right to stake the whole future on the card of an armed uprising. It would be a mistake to think that such action now would, if it were unsuccessful, lead only to such consequences as did July 16-18. Now it is a question of something more. It is a question of decisive battle, and defeat in *that* battle would spell defeat to the revolution.

This is the general situation. But every one who does not want merely to talk about uprising must carefully weigh its chances. And here we consider it our duty to say that at the present moment it would be most harmfu

to underestimate the forces of our opponent and overestimate our own forces. The forces of the opponent are greater than they appear. Petrograd is decisive, and in Petrograd the enemies of the proletarian party have accumulated substantial forces: 5,000 military cadets, *excellently* armed, *organised*, *anxious* (because of their class position) and able to fight, also the staff, shock troops, Cossacks, a substantial part of the garrison, and very considerable artillery, which has taken up a position in fan-like formation around Petrograd. Then our adversaries will undoubtedly attempt, with the aid of the C.E.C., to bring troops from the front. The proletarian party at the present time would have to fight under an entirely different interrelationship of forces than <sup>at</sup> the days of the Kornilov affair. At that time we fought together with the S.-R.'s, the Mensheviks, and to some extent, even with the adherents of Kerensky. Now, however, the proletarian party would have to fight against the Black-Hundreds, plus the Cadets, plus Kerensky and the Provisional Government, plus the C.E.C. (S.-R.'s and Mensheviks).

The forces of the proletarian party are, of course, very substantial, but the decisive question is, is the sentiment among the workers and soldiers of the capital really such that they see salvation only in street fighting, that they are impatient to go into the streets? No. There is no such sentiment. Even those in favour of the uprising state that the sentiment of the masses of workers and soldiers is not at all even like their sentiments upon the eve of July 16. If among the great masses of the poor of the capital there were a militant sentiment burning to go into

the streets, it might have served as a guarantee that an uprising initiated by them would draw in the biggest organisations (railroad unions, unions of post office and telegraph workers, etc.), where the influence of our party is weak. But since there is no such sentiment even in the factories and barracks, it would be a self-deception to build any plans on it.

We are told: but the railroad workers and the post office and telegraph employees are starving, are crushed by poverty, are exasperated with the Provisional Government. All this is so, of course. But all this is still no guarantee that they will support an uprising against the government, in spite of the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks. The railroad workers and employees were crushed by poverty also in 1906, even as they are now in Germany and France. And still this does not provide assurance of support for the uprising. If all these people who are crushed by poverty were always ready to support the armed uprising of the Socialists, we would have won Socialism long ago.

This emphasises our immediate task. The Congress of Soviets has been called for November 2. It must be convened, no matter what the cost. It must organisationally consolidate the growing influence of the proletarian party. It must become the centre of the consolidation around the Soviets of all proletarian and semi-proletarian organisations, such as those same railroad unions, unions of post office and telegraph employees, bank employees, etc. As yet there is no firm organisational connection between these organisations and the Soviets. This cannot be considered as other than a symptom of the organisational

weakness of the proletarian party. But such a connection is in any case a preliminary condition for the actual carrying out of the slogan, "All power to the Soviets." For any given moment this slogan naturally signifies the most decisive resistance to the slightest encroachment on the rights of the Soviets and organisations created by them, on the part of the government.

Under these conditions it would be a serious historical untruth to formulate the question of the transfer of power into the hands of the proletarian party in the term: either now or never.

No. The party of the proletariat will grow. Its programme will become known to broader and broader masses. It will have the opportunity to continue on an even larger scale the merciless exposure of the policy of the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s who stand in the way of actual transfer of the power into the hands of the majority of the people. And there is only one way in which the proletarian party can interrupt its successes, and that is if under present conditions it takes upon itself to initiate an uprising and thus expose the proletariat to the blows of the entire consolidated counter-revolution, supported by the petty-bourgeois democracy.

Against this perilous policy we raise our voice in warning.

G. ZINOWIEV.

U. KAMENEV.

